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THE LIFE OF GORDON

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GENERAL GORDON,

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER THE CRIMEA,

AND LENT BY HIS NIECE, MISS DUNLOP.

THE LIFE OF GORDON

MAJOR-GENERAL, R.E., C.B.; TURKISH FIELD-MARSHAL, GRAND CORDON MEDJIDIEH, AND PASHA; CHINESE TITU (FIELD-MARSHAL), YELLOW JACKET ORDER.

"'Tis a name which ne'er hath been dishonour'd,
And never will, I trust—most surely never
By such a youth as thou."

—SWINTON ON ADAM GORDON.

26493

BY

DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF CHINA;" "ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA;" "LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK," ETC., ETC.

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VOLUME I

44.8.76

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
MDCCCXCVI

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PREFACE.

As so many books of a more or less biographical nature have been written about General Charles Gordon, it is both appropriate and natural that I should preface the following pages with a statement of a personal character as to how and why I have written another.

In the year 1881 I told General Gordon that I contemplated describing his career as soon as I had finished writing my "History of China." His laughing reply was: "You know I shall never read it, but you can have all my papers now in the possession of my brother, Sir Henry Gordon." My history took a very long time to write, and the third volume was not published until April 1884, when General Gordon was hemmed in, to use his own words, at Khartoum.

For over two years General Gordon's papers and letters remained in my custody, and they included the Equator and Soudan correspondence, which was so admirably edited by Dr Birkbeck Hill in that intensely interesting volume, "Colonel Gordon in Central Africa." The papers relating to China and the Taeping Rebellion were freely used in my history. To them I have the privilege of adding in the present volume an authoritative narrative of the events that followed the execution of the Taeping Wangs at Soochow, and of thus rendering tardy justice to the part taken in them by Sir Halliday Macartney. Among the contents of the large portmanteau in which all these documents were stored, I noticed a thick bundle of letters, in somewhat faded handwriting, and an examination of their

contents showed me that they were of the deepest interest as relating to the important events of the Crimean War, and to the first seven years of Gordon's service in the Army. I at once went to Sir Henry Gordon, who honoured me with his friendship and confidence in no less a degree than his distinguished and ever-lamented brother, and begged of him permission to publish them. He at once gave his consent, which was ratified by the late Miss Augusta Gordon, the hero's favourite sister. The letters appeared in July 1884, under the title of "General Gordon's Letters from the Crimea, the Danube, and Armenia." In the proper place I have told what Kinglake, the historian of the war, thought of them and their author.

In the rush of books that followed the fall of Khartoum, no favourable opportunity for carrying out my original purpose presented itself; and, indeed, I may say that the anonymous biographical work I performed during the course of the year 1885 would have filled a large-sized volume. Moreover, the terrible events of the fall of Khartoum, and the failure of the relieving expedition, were too close at hand to allow of a just view being taken of them, and it was necessary to defer an intention which I never abandoned. It seemed to me that the tenth anniversary of the fall of Khartoum would be an appropriate occasion for the appearance of a Life claiming to give a complete view and final verdict on the remarkable career and character of the man, with whom his own friendly inclination had made me exceptionally well acquainted.

In 1893, therefore, I began to take steps to carry out my project, and to the notification of my intention and the application for assistance in regard to unpublished papers, I received from several of the principal representatives of the Gordon family encouraging replies. But at this time both Sir Henry Gordon and Miss Gordon were dead, and I discovered that the latter had bound her literary executrix, Miss Dunlop, a niece of General Gordon's, by a promise not to divulge the bulk

of the unpublished papers during her lifetime. I am happy to say, however, that Miss Dunlop, without accepting any responsibility for what I have written, has with the greatest possible kindness read these pages, and assisted me to attain complete accuracy in the facts, so far as they relate to family and personal matters, but excluding altogether from her purview all military and political topics. For that co-operation, unfortunately restricted by the condition of the promise to Miss Gordon, I avail myself of this opportunity to express my grateful thanks; and I am also indebted to Miss Dunlop for the youthful unpublished portrait of Gordon which forms the frontispiece of this volume, and also for that of the house in which he was born.

When I was first confronted with the difficulty that the unpublished papers would not be accessible to me, I contemplated the abandonment of my task; but a brief consideration made me conclude that, even without these documents, I had special knowledge, derived from Sir Henry Gordon and many other sources, that would enable me to deal with all the more important passages of General Gordon's life. The result must be judged from the Life itself; but I have not sought to make any partisan attack on anyone, although, when I have felt compelled to criticise and censure, I have done so with a full sense of responsibility as well as with reluctance. I may be pardoned the confidence I express when I say that I am sure nothing in the unpublished documents will affect the main conclusions to which I have come on the Khartoum mission, its inception and disastrous close.

I am permitted by the courtesy of the proprietors of *The Times* to reproduce in these pages the several articles and letters which originally appeared in the columns of that paper.

It is a personal matter, of no interest except to myself, but I should like to state that the work would have been out much sooner but for a long and serious illness.

DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER

29th August 1896.

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PORTRAIT OF GENERAL GORDON, TAKEN SOON AFTER THE CRIMEA . *Frontispiece*

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THE LIFE OF GORDON.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE.

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON was born on 28th January 1833, at No. 1 Kemp Terrace, Woolwich Common, where his father, an officer in the Royal Artillery, was quartered at the time. The picture given elsewhere of this house will specially interest the reader as the birth-place of Gordon. It still stands, as described by Gordon's father in a private memoir, at the corner of Jackson's Lane, on Woolwich Common.

The name "Gordon" has baffled the etymologists, for there is every reason to believe that the not inappropriate connection with the Danish word for a spear is due to a felicitous fancy rather than to any substantial reality. There is far more justification for the opinion that the name comes through a French source than from a Danish. The Gorduni were a leading clan of Cæsar's most formidable opponents, the Nervi; a Duke Gordon charged among the peers of Charlemagne; and the name is not unknown at the present day in the Tyrol. The "Gordium" of Phrygia and the "Gordonia" of Macedonia are also names that suggest an Eastern rather than a Northern origin. History strengthens this supposition and entirely disposes of the Danish hypothesis. The first bearer of the name Gordon appeared in Scotland at far too near a date to the Danish descents upon that country to encourage the view that he was a member of that most bitterly hated race. Nowhere were the Danes more hated or less successful than in Scotland, yet we are asked to believe that the founder of one of the most powerful families in that kingdom belonged to this alien and detested people. The silence itself of the chronicler sufficiently refutes the idea that the first Gordon was a renegade or a traitor, as he must have been if he were a Dane.

In all probability the first Gordon, who helped Malcolm Canmore, and received in return a large grant of lands in Berwick, which became known as the Gordon country, was one of the many Norman knights attracted to the Court of Edward the Confessor. Accepting for the occasion the popular legendary version of Shakespeare, rather than the corrected account of modern historians, he may be supposed to have found his way north to the camp of Siward, where the youthful and exiled Scotch Prince had sought shelter from Macbeth, and it is no undue stretch of fancy to suggest that he took his part in the memorable overthrow of that usurper at Dunsinane, and thus obtained the favour of his successor. The growth of the Gordon family in place and power was rapid. To the lands on the borders was soon added the Huntly country on Deeside, where Aboyne Castle now stands, and in a very short period the Gordons ranked among the most powerful and warlike clans of Scotland. As Sir Walter Scott wrote of Adam Gordon, in words which might be appropriately applied to the subject of this biography:

> "'Tis a name which ne'er hath been dishonour'd,
> And never will, I trust—most surely never
> By such a youth as thou!"

Be its remote origin what it may, no name has appeared more prominently or more honourably in the British Army Lists during the last century and a half than that of Gordon. One of the most famous of our regiments bears and has nobly upheld the name. In honourable and friendly rivalry with the equally numerous and equally distinguished clans of Grant and Cameron, the Gordons have figured on every battle-field from Minden to Candahar, thus establishing at the same time the political wisdom of Chatham, who first turned the Highlanders from a cause of danger into a source of strength, and the military ardour and genius of their own race. Thus it came to pass that the spirit of remote warlike ages was perpetuated, and that the profession of arms continued to be the most natural one for any bearer of the name Gordon. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the practice of his nearest relations, as well as the traditions of his race, marked out Charles Gordon for a soldier's career.

Passing over an uncertain connection with the General Peter Gordon, who rose high in the Russian service under Peter the Great, the nearest direct ancestor of whom we can speak with absolute confidence was Charles Gordon's great-grandfather David Gordon, who served as a lieutenant in Lascelles' regiment of foot—afterwards the 47th Regiment—at the battle of Prestonpans. Although the majority of the clans were still loyal to the Stuarts, it seems from this that some of them had entered the Hanoverian service probably in that most distinguished regiment,

the First Royal Scots, which a few years before Culloden had fought gallantly at Fontenoy. At Prestonpans David Gordon had the bad fortune to be made prisoner by the forces of Charles Edward, and he found on the victorious side the whole of the Gordon clan, under the command of Sir William Gordon of Park, a younger son of the Earl of Huntly. As he was able to claim kindred with Sir William, David Gordon received better treatment than he might have expected, and in a short time was allowed to go free, either on an exchange of prisoners or more probably on his parole. This incident is specially interesting, because, after making every allowance for the remoteness and vagueness of the old Highland custom of cousinship, it seems to bring Charles Gordon's ancestry into sufficiently close relationship with the main Gordon stem of the Huntlys. After his release David Gordon does not appear to have taken any further part in the war which terminated at Culloden, and he emigrated shortly afterwards to North America, where his death is recorded as having taken place at a comparatively early age at Halifax in the year 1752.

That he came of gentle blood is also proved by the fact that the Duke of Cumberland stood sponsor to his son, who bore the Duke's names of William Augustus. This second Gordon, of the particular branch that has interest for us, also entered the army, and held a commission in several regiments. The most memorable event in his life was his taking part in Wolfe's decisive victory on the heights of Abraham. In 1773 he married a lady, Miss Anna Maria Clarke, whose brother was rector of Hexham in Northumberland, and by her had a family of four daughters and three sons. Of the latter, two died at an early age, and only the youngest, William Henry, born in 1786, survived to manhood. He is especially interesting to us, because he was the father of General Gordon.

Like his father and grandfather, William Henry Gordon chose the profession of a soldier, and entered the Royal Artillery. He saw a great deal of active service, being with his corps in the Peninsula and at Maida, commanding at a later period the Artillery at Corfu and Gibraltar, and attaining before his death in 1865 the rank of Lieutenant-General. He was also connected with the Woolwich Arsenal as Director of the Carriage Department. He has been described as an excellent officer if a somewhat strict disciplinarian, and his firm character of noble integrity lived again in his sons. He married, in 1817, Elizabeth, the daughter of Samuel Enderby, a merchant whaler, one of those west country worthies who carried on the traditions of Elizabeth to the age of Victoria. It would not be possible to present a complete picture of Gordon's mother, and therefore none will be attempted here; but all the

available evidence agrees in describing her as a paragon of women, and as having exercised an exceptional influence over her children. Gordon himself bore the most expressive testimony to her virtues and memory when, long years afterwards, he closed an exordium on the filial affection due to a mother with the outburst—"Oh! how my mother loved me!"

Such in brief were the forebears of the hero who comes next after Nelson in national veneration. To understand him and his career, it must be remembered that he came of a gallant race, with a quick sense of honour, seeing clearly the obvious course of duty, and never hesitating in its fulfilment. These qualities were not peculiar to the man, but inherited from his race, and as they had never been contaminated by the pursuit of wealth in any form, they retained the pristine vigour and fire of a chivalrous and noble age. What was personal and peculiar to Charles Gordon had to be evolved by circumstance and the important occurrences with which it was his lot to be associated throughout his military and public career, but his soldierly talent and virtue must be mainly assigned to the traditions and practice of his ancestors.

Of the five sons of General William Henry Gordon and Elizabeth Enderby, Charles George Gordon was the fourth. His eldest brother, Henry William Gordon, born in 1818, had entered the army, first in the 8th Regiment, and transferred in a short time to the 59th, when, at the early age of ten, Charles Gordon was sent off to school at Taunton. The selection of this school in the western country was due to the head-master, Mr Rogers, being a brother of a governess in the Gordon family. Little is known of his early childhood beyond the fact that he had lived, before he was ten, at Corfu, where his father held a command for some years. The Duke of Cambridge has publicly stated that he recollects, when quartered at Corfu at this period, having seen a bright and intelligent boy who occupied the room next to his own, and who subsequently became General Gordon. At Taunton Gordon remained during the greater part of five years, enjoying the advantages of one of the most excellent grammar schools in the West of England, and although he failed to make any special mark as a scholar, I find that, whether on account of his later fame or for some special characteristic that marked him out from the general run of boys, his name is still remembered there by something more than the initials cut upon his desk. If he distinguished himself in anything it was in map-making and drawing, and he exhibited the same qualifications to the end of his career. How careful and excellent the grounding at Taunton school must have been was shown by the fact that, after one year's special coaching at Mr Jefferies' school at Shooter's Hill, Gordon passed direct into the Royal Military

Academy at Woolwich. It is noteworthy that during the whole of the period we are now approaching, he never showed the least tendency to extravagance, and his main anxiety seems to have been to save his parents all possible expense, more especially because they had a large family of daughters. To the end of his life, and in each successive post, Gordon was the slave of duty. At this time, and during the years that follow, down to the Chinese campaigns, his guiding thought was how to save his family the smallest expense on his account, and yet at the same time to hold his head high, and to show himself worthy of his race.

Gordon entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1848, when he had not completed his sixteenth year, and during the four years he remained there he gave some evidence of the qualities that subsequently distinguished him, at the same time that he showed a lightness of disposition which many will think at strange variance with the gravity and even solemnity of his later years. Among his fellow-students he was not distinguished by any special or exclusive devotion to study. He was certainly no bookworm, and he was known rather for his love of sport and boisterous high spirits than for attention to his lessons or for a high place in his class. More than once he was involved in affairs that, if excusable and natural on the score of youth, trenched beyond the borders of discipline, and the stories of life at the Academy that he recited for many years after he left were not exactly in harmony with the popular idea of the ascetic of Mount Carmel.

As the reader treasures up the boyish escapades of Nelson and Clive, so will enduring interest be felt in those outbreaks of the boy Gordon, which made him the terror of his superiors. They are recorded on the unimpeachable evidence of his elder brother, and some of them were even narrated by Gordon himself to his niece nearly thirty years after they happened. Sir Henry is the writer.

"Charles Gordon with a brother (William Augustus) more unruly than himself, finding the time hang heavily upon their hands during the vacation, employed themselves in various ways. Their father's house (at Woolwich) was opposite to that of the Commandant of the Garrison, and was overrun with mice. These were caught, the Commandant's door quietly opened, and the mice were transferred to new quarters. In after life (that is in 1879, when in the Soudan) Charles Gordon wrote to one of his nieces: 'I am glad to hear the race of true Gordons is not extinct. Do you not regret the Arsenal and its delights? You never, any of you, made a proper use of the Arsenal workmen as we did. They used to neglect their work for our orders, and turned out

some splendid squirts—articles that would wet you through in a minute. As for the crossbows we had made, they were grand with screws. One Sunday afternoon twenty-seven panes of glass were broken in the large storehouses. They were found to have been perforated with a small hole (ventilation), and Captain Soady nearly escaped a premature death; a screw passed his head, and was as if it had been screwed into the wall which it had entered. Servants were kept at the door with continual bell-ringings. Your uncle Freddy (a younger brother) was pushed into houses, the bell rung, and the door held to prevent escape. Those were the days of the Arsenal.'"

Sir Henry continues:

"But what Charles Gordon considered as his greatest achievement was one that he in after years often alluded to. At this time (1848) the senior class of Cadets, then called the Practical Class, were located in the Royal Arsenal, and in front of their halls of study there were earthworks upon which they were practised from time to time in profiling and other matters. The ins and outs of these works were thoroughly well known to Charles Gordon and his brother, who stole out at night—but we will leave him to tell his own story. He says: 'I forgot to tell —— of how when Colonel John Travers of the Hill Folk (he lived on Shooter's Hill) was lecturing to the Arsenal Cadets in the evening, a crash was heard, and every one thought every pane of glass was broken; small shot had been thrown. However, it was a very serious affair, for like the upsetting of a hive, the Cadets came out, and only darkness, speed, and knowledge of the fieldworks thrown up near the lecture-room enabled us to escape. That was before I entered the curriculum. The culprits were known afterwards, and for some time avoided the vicinity of the Cadets. I remember it with horror to this day, for no mercy would have been shown by the Pussies, as the Cadets were called.'"

After he entered the Academy the same love of fun and practical joking characterised him. Sir Henry writes: "After he had been some time at the Academy and earned many good-conduct badges, an occasion arose when it became necessary to restrain the Cadets in leaving the dining-hall, the approach to which was by a narrow staircase. At the top of this staircase stood the senior corporal, with out stretched arms, facing the body of Cadets. This was too much for Charlie Gordon, who, putting his head down, butted with it, and catching the officer in the pit of the stomach not only sent him down the stairs, but through the glass door beyond. The officer jumped up unhurt, and Gordon was placed in confinement and nearly dismissed.

"Upon another occasion, when he was near his commission, a great deal of bullying was going on, and in order to repress it a number of the

last comers were questioned, when one of them said that Charlie Gordon had on one occasion hit him on the head with a clothes-brush. The lad admitted it was not a severe blow; nevertheless Charlie Gordon was for this slight offence put back six months for his commission, which turned out well in the end, since it secured for him a second lieutenancy in the Royal Engineers in place of the Royal Artillery." This alteration in the branch of the service to which he was attached was due to his own act. He decided that, as his contemporaries would be put ahead of him, he would work for the Engineers instead of the Artillery.

Even to the end of his life there were two sides to his character. Private grief, much disappointment, and a long solitary existence, contributed to make him a melancholy philosopher, and a sometimes austere critic of a selfish world, but beneath this crust were a genial and generous disposition that did not disdain the lighter side of human nature, a heart too full of kindness to cherish wrath for long, and an almost boyish love of fun that could scarcely be repressed. If this was the individual in his quieter and contemplative moods, an energy that never tired, and a warlike spirit that only needed the occasion to blaze forth, revealed the man of action. It may be pronounced a paradox to say so, but to the end of his life the true Gordon was more of the soldier than the saint.

Even in the midst of his escapades at the Academy, something of the spirit of the future hero revealed itself. However grave the offence or heavy the punishment, he was never backward in taking his share—or more than his share—of the blame for any scrape into which he and his friends were brought by their excessive high spirits. On more than one occasion his ardour and sense of justice resulted in his being made the scapegoat of worse offenders, and it seems probable that he generally bore more than his proper share of the blame and punishment for acts of insubordination. But there were limits to his capacity of suffering and sense of guilt, and when one of his superiors declared that he "would never make an officer," he touched a point of honour, and Gordon's vigorous and expressive reply was to tear the epaulettes from his shoulder and throw them at his superior's feet. In this incident the reader will not fail to see a touch and forecast of greatness. He was ever willing to pay the penalty of youthful indiscretion, but he was sensitive to the reproach of honour, and his exuberant spirits detracted in no respect from his sense of the nobility of his profession. His earnestness saved him from the frivolity into which a light heart and good health might have led him, and compensated for his disinclination to devote all his spare time to the severer studies of his college.

On June 23rd, 1852, nearly four years after he entered the Royal Military Academy, Charles Gordon passed out with the rank of second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. Notwithstanding some remissness in his work, he had passed through all his examinations—"Those terrible examinations," as he said long years afterwards—"how I remember them! Sometimes I dream of them,"—and in accordance with the regulations in force he was sent to Chatham for the purpose of completing there his technical training as an engineer officer. Chatham, as is well known, is the Headquarters of the Royal Engineer Corps, to which it stands in the same relation as Woolwich to the Artillery. There Gordon remained until February 1854, constantly engaged on field work and in making plans and surveys, at which his old skill as a draughtsman soon made him exceptionally competent. This kind of work was also far more congenial to him than the cramming at the Academy, and he soon gained the reputation of being an intelligent and hard-working subaltern. In the month named he attained the grade of full lieutenant, and on taking his step he was at once ordered to Pembroke Dock, then one of the busiest naval dêpots and most important military arsenals in the country. The war clouds were already lowering over Eastern Europe, and although all hope of maintaining peace had not been abandoned, arrangements were in progress for the despatch, if necessary, of a strong naval and military expedition to the Black Sea.

At Pembroke, Gordon was at once employed on the construction of the new fortifications and batteries considered necessary for the defence of so important a position, and in one of his letters home he wrote: "I have been very busy in doing plans for another fort, to be built at the entrance of the haven. I pity the officers and men who will have to live in these forts, as they are in the most desolate places, seven miles from any town, and fifteen from any conveyance." Seclusion and solitude had evidently no charms for him at that period. In another letter about this time he wrote expressing his relief at being "free from the temptations of a line regiment," and concluded with the self-depreciatory remark that he was "such a miserable wretch that he was sure to be led away." In yet another letter from Pembroke, written not many weeks after his arrival, he reveals something of the deep religious feeling which was no doubt greatly strengthened by his experiences in the Crimea, and which became stronger and more pronounced as years went on. In writing to his favourite sister in the summer of 1854, he gives the following interesting bit of biographical information: "You know I never was confirmed. When I was a cadet I thought it was a useless sin, as I did not intend to alter (not that it was in my power to be converted when I

chose). I, however, took my first sacrament on Easter Day (16th April 1854) and have communed ever since."

Charles Gordon was still occupied on the Pembroke fortifications when war broke out with Russia on the Eastern Question. His father was at the time stationed at Gibraltar in command of the Royal Artillery, and was never employed nearer the scene of hostilities during the war. But his two elder brothers were at the front—the eldest, the late Sir Henry Gordon, at Balaclava, where he served in the Commissariat, and the next brother, the late General Enderby Gordon, with his battery under Lord Raglan. At the battle of the Alma, fought on 20th September 1854, Enderby Gordon specially distinguished himself, for he worked one of the two guns of Turner's Battery, which exercised such a decisive influence on the fortunes of the day. Readers of Kinglake's "History" will remember that it was the flank fire of these two guns which compelled the Russian battery of sixteen guns on the Causeway to retire and thus expose the Russian front to our attack. It is a little curious to find that while one brother was thus distinguishing himself in the first battle of the war, another was writing from Pembroke Dock as follows: "—— says there were no artillery engaged in the battle of the Alma, so that Enderby was safe out of that." Enderby Gordon also distinguished himself at Inkerman, where he acted as aide-de-camp to General Strangeways. He subsequently earned the reputation of a good officer during the Indian Mutiny, and when he died he had, like his father, attained the rank of Lieutenant-General, and received besides the Companionship of the Bath. One characteristic incident has been recorded of him. As he commanded a column in India, he had only to ask for promotion to obtain it; this he declined to do, because he would thus have stepped over a friend.

In General Gordon's own letters from the Crimea there are frequent references to his eldest brother, Henry Gordon, a man of whom it may be said here that the best was never publicly known, for during a long and varied career, first in the combative branch of the army as an officer of the 59th Regiment, and then as a non-combative officer in the Ordnance Department, he showed much ability, but had few opportunities of special distinction. In several of General Gordon's transactions Sir Henry was closely mixed up, especially with the Congo mission; and I should like to say, of my own knowledge, that he was thoroughly in sympathy with all his projects for the suppression of the slave trade, had mastered the voluminous Blue Books and official papers, from the time of Ismail to the dark days of Khartoum, in so thorough a manner that the smallest detail was fixed in his brain, and had so completely assimilated his brother's views that an hour's consul-

tation with him was almost as fertile a source of inspiration as it would have been with the General himself. I believe that the original cause of Sir Henry's influence over his brother was that he disclaimed having any, and that he most carefully avoided any attempt to force his advice on his younger brother, as so many of our elders deem to be their right and prerogative. General Gordon was a bad listener to advice at any time or from anyone. He acted almost entirely on his own judgment, and still more on his own impulse. His first thoughts were his best thoughts, or, perhaps, as Tennyson says, "his third thoughts, which are a maturer first." Sir Henry knew the ingrained and unalterable character of his brother, and adapted himself to it, partly through affection and partly through admiration, for in his eyes Charles Gordon was the truest of heroes. No man ever possessed a truer or more solicitous friend than General Gordon found in him. Sir Henry was thoroughly devoted to him and his interests, and carried out all his wishes and instructions to the very letter.

Having said this much about the relations between Gordon and his brother, it would be an inexcusable omission to pass over the still more striking sympathy and affection that united him with his sisters. From his first appointment into the service he corresponded on religious and serious subjects with his elder sister, the late Miss Gordon, who only survived her brother a few years, with remarkable regularity, and as time went on the correspondence became more, rather than less constant, and in his letters to her were to be found his most secret thoughts and aspirations. Most of the letters from the Crimea were addressed to his mother; but, in an interesting volume published in 1888, Miss Gordon presented the world with the remainder of her brother's letters, spread over thirty active and eventful years. One of General Gordon's most cherished objects, resembling in that, as in other respects, Lord Lawrence, was to add to the comfort of his sisters, and when he left England on his last fatal mission to Egypt, his will, made the night before he left for Brussels, provided that all he possessed should be held in trust for the benefit of his well-beloved sister, Mary Augusta, and that it was to pass only on her death to the heirs he therein designated. It is not necessary to enter into fuller particulars on this subject, but it may be proper to say that his affection for his other sisters was not less warm or less reciprocated. Of his six sisters, of whom two alone survive, it is only necessary to refer here (in addition to Miss Gordon) to the youngest, who married Dr Andrew Moffitt, who was not merely head medical officer with the Ever Victorious Army, but Gordon's right-hand man in China. Dr Moffitt was a man of high courage; on one occasion he saved Gordon's

life when a Taeping attempted to murder him in his tent, and an English officer, who served with the Force, has described him in these two lines: "He was imbued with the same spirit as his future brother-in-law; he was a clever Chinese scholar and an A1 surgeon." Dr Moffitt, who received a gold medal and order, besides the Red Button of a Mandarin, from the Chinese Government for his brilliant services against the Taepings, died prematurely. To say less about these family relations would be an omission; to say more would be an intrusion, and they may be left with the reflection that as no one who knew him will dispute the depth and the strength of General Gordon's sentiments as a friend, his feelings towards the members of his own family cannot well be impugned.

Some account of the personal appearance of General Gordon will be deemed necessary, and may be appropriately given at this stage, although the subject is a dangerous one, because so very few people form the same impression about any one's appearance. There has been much discussion as to General Gordon's exact height, and I have been to much pains to obtain some decisive evidence on the subject. Unfortunately no such records as to height, etc., are kept about officers, and my search proved fruitless, more especially as the records at Woolwich for the period required were destroyed by fire some years ago. The best evidence I have obtained is that of General Gordon's tailors, Messrs Batten & Sons, of Southampton, who write: "We consider, by measurements in our books, that General Gordon was 5 ft. 9 in." As he had contracted a slight stoop, or, more correctly speaking, carried his head thrown forward, he looked in later life much less than his real height. The quotations at the end of this chapter will show some difference of opinion. His figure was very slight, but his nervous energy could never be repressed, and he was probably stronger than his appearance suggested. The suggestion of delicate health in his look and aspect, arising, as he was led to believe, but erroneously, from *angina pectoris*, or some mysterious chest pain, may have induced a belief that he was not robust, but this seems to have been baseless, because throughout his life, whether in the trenches of Sebastopol, the marshes of the Yangtse delta, or the arid plains of the Soudan, he appears to have equally enjoyed excellent health.

The only specific mention of serious illness was during his stay in the Soudan as Governor-General, when the chest pains became acute. These were at length traced to an enlarged liver, and perhaps the complaint was aggravated by excessive smoking. In the desert, far removed from medical aid, he obtained much relief from the use of Warburg's Tincture.

In his ordinary moods there was nothing striking about the face. The colour of the eye was too light—yet the glance was as keen as a rapier, and, as the little Soudan boy Capsune, whom he had educated, said, "Gordon's eyes looked you through and through"—the features were not sufficiently marked, the carriage of the man was too diffident and modest to arrest or detain attention, and the explanation of the universal badness of the numerous photographs taken of him at all stages of his career is probably to be found in the deficiency of colouring and contrast. Everything in his appearance depended on expression, and expression generally baffles the photographer. Perhaps the least objectionable of all these portraitures is the steel plate in Dr Birkbeck Hill's volume on "Gordon in Central Africa," and that not because it is a faithful likeness, but because it represents a bust that might well be imagined to belong to a hero. It was only when some great idea or some subject in which he was interested seized his imagination that one could perceive that the square jaw denoted unshakable resolution, and that the pale blue eye could flash with the fire of a born leader of men. In tranquil moments no one would have been struck by a casual glance at his face, but these were rare, for in congenial company, and with persons he trusted, Gordon was never tranquil, pacing up and down the room, with only brief stops to impress a point on his listener by holding his arm for a few seconds, and looking at him intently to see if he followed with understanding and interest the drift of his remarks, lighting cigarette after cigarette to enable him to curb his own impetuosity, and demonstrating in every act and phrase the truth of his own words that "inaction was intolerable to him." Such was the man as I recall him on the all too few occasions when it was my privilege and good fortune to receive him during his brief visits to London of late years, and to hear from him his confidential views on the questions in which he took so deep an interest. One final remark must be hazarded about the most remarkable point after all in General Gordon's personality. I refer to his voice. It was singularly sweet, and for a man modulated in a very low tone, but there was nothing womanish about it, as was the case with his able contemporary Sir Bartle Frere, whose voice was distinctly feminine in its timbre. I know of no other way to describe it than to say that it seemed to me to express the thorough and transparent goodness of the speaker, and the exquisite gentleness of his nature. If angels speak with the human voice, Gordon's tone must have borne affinity to theirs.

In completing this subject it may be appropriate to quote a few of the more important and interesting descriptions of his personal appearance, contributed by those who had opportunities of seeing him.

An officer, who served with General Gordon in China, describes his first interview with him in the following words :—

"C—— introduced me to a light-built, active, wiry, middle-sized man of about thirty-two years of age, in the undress uniform of the Royal Engineers. The countenance bore a pleasant frank appearance, eyes light blue, with a fearless look in them, hair crisp and inclined to curl, conversation short and decided. This was Major C. G. Gordon."

General Sir Gerald Graham who, to use his own words, was Gordon's "school-fellow at Woolwich, his comrade in the Crimea and China, and for many years past a more or less regular correspondent," has put on record the following interesting description of the hero, and it should not be forgotten that, excepting his companion, Colonel Donald Stewart, and Mr Power, General Graham was the last Englishman to see General Gordon in this world.

"Not over 5 feet 9 inches in height, but of compact build, his figure and gait characteristically expressed resolution and strength. His face, although in itself unpretending, was one that in the common phrase 'grew upon you.' Time had not streaked with grey the crisp, curly brown hair of his youth and traced lines of care on his ample forehead and strong clear face, bronzed with exposure to the tropical sun. His usual aspect was serene and quiet, and although at times a ruffling wave of uncontrollable impatience or indignation might pass over him, it did not disturb him long. The depth and largeness of Gordon's nature, which inspired so much confidence in others, seemed to afford him a sense of inner repose, so that outer disturbance was to him like the wind that ruffles the surface of the sea, but does not affect its depths. The force and beauty of Gordon's whole expression came from within, and as it were irradiated the man, the steady, truthful gaze of the blue-grey eyes seeming a direct appeal from the upright spirit within. Gordon's usual manner charmed by its simple, unaffected courtesy, but although utterly devoid of self-importance he had plenty of quiet dignity, or even of imperious authority at command when required. With his friends he had a fund of innocent gaiety that seemed to spring from his impulsiveness, while his strong sense of humour often enabled him to relieve his impatience or indignation by a good-natured sarcasm."

Two further descriptions by men who served under him at Gravesend in the interval between the Taeping War and the first mission to the Soudan will suffice to complete the personal impressions that may help the reader to form some idea of the appearance of General Gordon. The first is from the pen of Mr W. E. Lilley, who brought out a special volume on Gordon at Gravesend.

"In Colonel Gordon's appearance there was nothing particularly

striking. He was rather under the average height, of slight proportions, and with little of the military bearing in his carriage, so that one would hardly have imagined that this kindly, unassuming gentleman was already one who had attracted the notice of his superiors by his courage and zeal in the Crimean War, and who had won lasting renown by subduing in China one of the greatest revolts the world had ever seen. This last exploit had gained for him the name by which he was from that time best known, viz. "Chinese Gordon." The greatest characteristic of his countenance was the clear blue eye, which seemed to have a magical power over all who came within its influence. It read you through and through; it made it impossible for you to tell him anything but the truth, it inspired your confidence, it kindled with compassion at any story of distress, and it sparkled with good humour at anything really funny or witty. From its glance you knew at once that at any risk he would keep his promise, that you might trust him with anything and everything, and that he would stand by you if all other friends deserted you."

The other impression, formed under precisely the same circumstances, is that of Mr Arthur Stannard, recorded in the *Nineteenth Century* of April 1885.

"The next moment I was looking into Chinese Gordon's eyes. What eyes they were! Keen and clear, filled with the beauty of holiness, bright with an unnatural brightness, their expression one of settled feverishness, the colour blue-grey as is the sky on a bitter March morning. In spite of the beautiful goodness of his heart and the great breadth of his charity, Gordon was far from possessing a placid temperament or from being patient over small things. Indeed his very energy and his single-mindedness tended to make him impatient and irritable whenever any person or thing interfered with his intentions or desires. . . . For a man of his small stature his activity was marvellous—he seemed able to walk every one else off their legs over rough ground or smooth. . . . In Gordon strength and weakness were most fantastically mingled. There was no trace of timidity in his composition. He had a most powerful will. When his mind was made up on a matter it never seemed to occur to him that there could be anything more to say about it. Such was his superb confidence in himself!"

When Gordon had been only a few months at Pembroke Dock he received orders to proceed to Corfu, and believing it to be due to his father's request, he wrote: "I suspect you used your influence to have me sent there instead of to the Crimea. It is a great shame of you." But the Fates were to be stronger than any private influence, for four days after he wrote those lines he received fresh orders directing him to

leave for the Crimea without delay in charge of huts. It seems that the change in his destination was due to Sir John Burgoyne, to whom he had expressed the strongest wish to proceed to the scene of war. On 4th December 1854, he received his orders at Pembroke, on the 6th he reported himself at the War Office, and in the evening of the same day he was at Portsmouth. It was at first intended that he should go out in a collier, but he obtained permission to proceed *viâ* Marseilles, which he pronounced "extremely lucky, as I am such a bad sailor." This opinion was somewhat qualified later on when he found that the Government did not prepay his passage, and he expressed the opinion pretty freely, in which most people would concur, that "it is very hard not to give us anything before starting." He left London on the 14th December, Marseilles in a French hired transport on the 18th, and reached Constantinople the day after Christmas Day. He was not much struck with anything he saw; pronounced Athens "very ugly and dirty," and the country around uncommonly barren; and was disappointed with the far-famed view on approaching Constantinople. The professional instinct displayed itself when he declared that the forts of the Dardanelles did not appear to be very strong, as, although numerous, they were open at the rear and overlooked by the heights behind. On 28th December Gordon left Constantinople in the *Golden Fleece* transport conveying the 39th Regiment to Balaclava. The important huts had not yet arrived in the collier from Portsmouth, but they could not be far behind, and Gordon went on in advance. The huts, it may be added, were built to contain twenty-four men, or two captains and four subalterns, or two field-officers or one general, and the number of these entrusted to the charge of Gordon was 320. These reinforcements were the first sent out to mitigate the hardships the British Army underwent during a campaign that the genius of Todleben and the fortitude of his courageous garrison rendered far more protracted and costly than had been anticipated.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRIMEA, DANUBE, AND ARMENIA.

CHARLES GORDON reached Balaclava on New Year's Day, 1855. He found everyone engaged in foraging expeditions, that the siege of Sebastopol excited no interest, that the road from the bay to the hill was like a morass, and that a railway to traverse it was being slowly laid down. Gordon remained about three weeks at Balaclava assisting in the erection of huts, and in the conveyance of some of them to the front. When this task was accomplished he was himself ordered to the trenches, where his work could not fail to be more exciting and also more dangerous than that upon which up to this he had been engaged.

Before following him it will be useful to summarise the leading events that had taken place in the Crimea up to this date. War between England and France on the one side, and Russia on the other, was finally declared in March 1854, the allied forces landed in the Crimea early in September 1854, and the first battle was fought on the Alma stream on the 20th of that month. In that battle 60,000 allied troops—20,000 English, 40,000 French—attacked 120,000 Russians in a strong and well-chosen position. The result was a brilliant victory for the allies, and there is no doubt that it was mainly won by the dashing attack of the English Infantry. The losses were—French, 60 killed and 500 wounded; English, 362 killed and 1620 wounded, thus furnishing clear evidence as to the force which bore the brunt of the engagement. The Russian loss was computed to be not less than 6000, or double that of the allies.

As the allied forces advanced towards Sebastopol the Russian Army assumed the offensive. The brilliant and never-to-be-forgotten Cavalry charges on 25th October, of the Light and Heavy Brigades, under Cardigan and Scarlett respectively, at Balaclava in the valley that stretched at the foot of the hills overlooking the bay of that name, had not merely vindicated the reputation of English horsemen for dash and daring, but had done something—at excessive cost, it is true—to clear the advance for the whole army. When the Russians, assuming in their turn the offensive, attacked our camps on the heights of Inkerman, they were

THE HOUSE IN WHICH GENERAL GORDON WAS BORN, ON WOOLWICH COMMON.

repulsed with heavy loss on both sides, and with the result that more than six months elapsed before they again ventured to show any inclination to attack in the open field, and then only to meet with fresh discomfiture on the banks of the Tchernaya.

The battle of Inkerman was fought in the early morning of 5th November, and again the brunt of the fighting fell on the English army. The Russian General, Todleben, subsequently stated that he reluctantly decided to attack the English camp instead of the French, because "the English position seemed to be so very weak." Here again the losses give no misleading idea of the proportionate share of the two allied armies in the struggle. While the Russian loss was put down in all at 11,000 men, the French lost 143 killed and 786 wounded; the English, 597 killed and 1760 wounded.

The opinion has been confidently expressed that if a rapid advance and attack had been made on Sebastopol immediately after Inkerman, the fortress would have been easily captured; but both before and during the siege the Russians made the best use of every respite the Allies gave them, and this lost opportunity, if it was one, never recurred. It will thus be seen that some of the most interesting incidents of the war had passed before Gordon set foot in the Crimea, but for an engineer officer the siege and capture of the fortress created by Todleben under the fire of his foes presented the most attractive and instructive phase of the campaign.

At this time the French army mustered about 100,000 men, the British about 23,000, and the Russian garrison of Sebastopol 25,000. In addition, there was a covering army, under the Grand Dukes and General Liprandi, which, despite its losses at Inkerman, was probably not less than 60,000, but the successive defeats at Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman had broken the confidence of the troops and reduced their leaders to inaction. The batteries were nearly completed when Gordon reached the front, and a good deal had already been written and said about the hardships of the soldiers. Gordon was a man of few wants, who could stand any amount of fatigue, and throughout his life he was always disposed to think that soldiers should never complain. Writing as late as 12th February 1855, when the worst of the winter was over, he says: "There are really no hardships for the officers; the men are the sufferers, and that is partly their own fault, as they are like children, thinking everything is to be done for them. The French soldier looks out for himself, and consequently fares much better." Something of the same conclusion had been forced on him when on board the French transport between Marseilles and Athens when he wrote: "The poor French soldiers, of whom there were 320 on board

without any shelter, must have suffered considerably from cold; they had no covering, and in spite of the wet, cold, and bad weather, they kept up their health however, and their high spirits also, when our men would have mutinied." And again, later on: "We have capital rations, and all the men have warm clothing, and more than enough of that. They of course grumble and growl a good deal. The contrast with the French in this respect is not to our advantage." It must in fairness be remembered that the worst of the maladministration was over before he reached the scene, and that he came with those reinforcements, not merely of men, but still more especially of supplies, which ended "the winter troubles," and converted them into the sanguine hopes and views of the spring.

Gordon was not long in the trenches before he came under fire, and the account of his first experience of real warfare may be given in his own words:—

"The night of February 14th I was on duty in the trenches, and if you look at the plan I sent you and the small sketch enclosed I will explain what I had to do. The French that night determined to join their sentries on their right and our sentries on our left, in advance of their and our trenches, so as to prevent the Russians coming up the ravine, and then turning against our flank. They determined to make a lodgment in the ruined house marked *B* on the sketch, and to run a trench up the hill to the left of this, while I was told to make a communication by rifle-pits from the caves *C* to the ruined house *B*. I got, after some trouble, eight men with picks and shovels, and asked the captain of the advance trench to give me five double sentries to throw out in advance. It was the first time he had been on duty here; and as for myself, I never had, although I kept that to myself. I led forward the sentries, going at the head of the party, and found the sentries of the advance had not held the caves, which they ought to have done after dark, so there was just a chance of the Russians being in them. I went on, however, and, though I did not like it, explored the caves almost alone. We then left two sentries on the hill above the caves, and went back, to get round and post two sentries below the caves. However, just as soon as we showed ourselves outside the caves and below them, bang! bang! went two rifles, the bullets hitting the ground close to us. The sentries with me retired in a rare state of mind, and my working party bolted, and were stopped with great difficulty. What had really happened was this: It was not a Russian attack, but the two sentries whom I had placed above the caves *had fired at us*, lost their caps, and bolted to the trench. Nothing after this would induce the sentries to go out, so I got the working party to go

forward with me. The Russians had, on the report of our shots, sent us a shower of bullets, their picket not being more than 150 yards away. I set the men to work, and then went down to the bottom of the ravine, and found the French in strength hard at work also. Having told them who we were, I returned to the trench, where I met Colonel —— of the 1st Royals. I warned him if he went out he would be sure to be hit by our own sentries or the Russians. He would go, however, and a moment afterwards was hit in the breast, the ball going through his coats, slightly grazing his ribs, and passing out again without hurting him. I stayed with my working party all night, and got home very tired."

In further illustration of the confusion prevailing in the trenches at night, he mentions in the same letter that while trying to find the caves he missed his way, and "very nearly walked into the town by mistake."

This was the more surprising because Gordon's intimate knowledge of the trenches was remarkable and well known. The following testimony given by Sir Charles Staveley affords striking proof that this reputation was not undeserved:—

"I happened to mention to Charlie Gordon that I was field officer for the day for command in the trenches next day, and, having only just returned from sick leave, that I was ignorant of the geography of our left attack. He said at once, 'Oh! come down with me to-night after dark, and I will show you over the trenches.' He drew me out a very clear sketch of the lines (which I have now), and down I went accordingly. He explained every nook and corner, and took me along outside our most advanced trench, the bouquets (volleys of small shells fired from mortars) and other missiles flying about us in, to me, a very unpleasant manner, he taking the matter remarkably coolly."

The late Sir George Chesney, a very competent and discriminating witness, gives evidence to the same effect:—

"In his humble position as an Engineer subaltern he attracted the notice of his superiors, not merely by his energy and activity, but by a special aptitude for war, developing itself amid the trench work before Sebastopol in a personal knowledge of the enemy's movements *such as no other officer attained.* We used to send him to find out what new move the Russians were making."

The next incident of the siege described by Gordon occurred about a week after his *baptême de feu* in the caves. While the French were somewhat deliberately making at Inkerman a battery for fifteen guns, the Russians, partly in a spirit of bravado, threw up in a single night a battery for nearly twenty guns immediately opposite, at a distance of not more than 600 yards from the French. As this was made

in the open ground, it was a defiance which could not be tolerated, and the French accordingly made their arrangements to assault it. Kinglake has graphically described the surprise of the French when they discovered this "white circlet or loop on the ground," and the attempt made by three battalions, with two other battalions in reserve, to capture it. A battalion of Zouaves, under the command of Colonel Cere, carried it in fine style, but the Russian reserves came up in great force, and their own reserves "declining to come to the scratch," as Gordon laconically put it, the Zouaves were in their turn compelled to fall back, with a loss of 200 killed. Encouraged by this success, the Russians gave the French another surprise a few days later, throwing up a second battery 300 yards further in advance of the first "white circlet." These two batteries, mounting between them, according to Kinglake, twenty-two guns, were finally strengthened and equipped by 10th March, and although the French talked much of storming them, nothing was done, much to Gordon's disgust. It was while these operations were in progress that Charles Gordon had a narrow escape of being killed. A shot from one of the Russian rifle-pits "as nearly as possible did for me," he wrote; "the bullet was fired not 180 yards off, and passed an inch above my nut into a bank I was passing." His only comment on this is very characteristic: "They are very good marksmen; their bullet is large and pointed."

This was the first but not the last escape he had during the siege. One of his brothers, writing home some three months later, a few days before the assault on the Redan, wrote as follows: "Charlie has had a miraculous escape. The day before yesterday he saw the smoke from an embrasure on his left and heard a shell coming, but did not see it. It struck the ground about five yards in front of him and burst, not touching him. If it had not burst it would have taken his head off." Of this later shave Gordon himself says nothing, but he describes a somewhat similar incident, which had, however, a fatal result. "We lost one of our captains named Craigie by a splinter of a shell. The shell burst above him, and by what is called chance struck him in the back, killing him at once."

During the three months March, April, and May, the siege languished, and Gordon apologises for the stupidity of his letters with the graphic observation: "It is not my fault, as none of the three nations—French, English, or Russian—will do anything."

At the end of May, however, there was a renewal of activity. General Pelissier succeeded to the French command, and, unlike his predecessors, made it his primary object to act in cordial co-operation with the English commander. He was also in favour of an energetic pro-

secution of the siege, with the view to an early assault. All the batteries were by this time completed, and 588 guns, with 700 rounds in readiness for each gun, were opposed to the 1174 in the Russian fortress. It only remained to utilise this terrific force, and at last orders were given for the commencement of what was known as the third bombardment. After nearly two days' incessant firing the French stormed the Mamelon and two advance redoubts. These were successfully carried and held, at the same time that the English stormed a position called the Quarries, close under the formidable Redan. Of this bombardment Gordon gives in one of his letters a very good description:—

"On the 6th we opened fire from all our batteries. I was on duty in the trenches. I could distinctly see the Russians in the Redan and elsewhere running about in great haste, and bringing up their gunners to the guns. They must have lost immensely, as our shot and shell continued to pour in upon them for hours without a lull. Never was our fire so successful. Before seven we had silenced a great many of their guns, while our loss was very small—only one man killed and four wounded. I was struck slightly with a stone from a round shot and stunned for a second, which old Jones has persisted in returning as wounded. [It was, notwithstanding, a real wound.] However, I am all right, so do not think otherwise. Our fire was continued all night, and the next day until four o'clock, when we opened with new batteries much nearer, and our fire then became truly terrific. Fancy 1000 guns (which is the number of ourselves, the French, and Russians combined) firing at once shells in every direction. On our side alone we have thirty-nine 13″ mortars. At half-past five three rockets gave the signal for the French to attack the Mamelon and the redoubts of Selingkinsk and Volhynia. They rushed up the slope in full view of the allied armies. The Russians fired one or two guns when the French were in the embrasures. We then saw the Russians cut out on the other side, and the French after them, towards the Malakoff Tower, which they nearly reached, but were so punished by the guns of this work that they were obliged to retire, the Russians in their turn chasing them through the Mamelon into their own trenches. This was dreadful, as it had to be assaulted again. The French, however, did so immediately, and carried it splendidly. The redoubts of Volhynia and Selingkinsk were taken easily on our side. In front of the right attack a work called the Quarries had to be taken, which was done at the same time as the Mamelon. The Russians cut out and ran, while our men made their lodgment for our fellows. We were attacked four times in the night, but held the work. If we had liked to assault, I am sure we should have taken the place with little loss, some of our men being close to the Redan. The

French took twenty guns and 400 prisoners, and found the Mamelon so traversed as to have no difficulty in making their lodgment. We were driven from the Quarries three times in the night, the Russians having directed all their efforts against them. Our loss is supposed to be 1000 killed and wounded. Nearly all our working party had to be taken for fighting purposes. The attacking columns were 200 strong; one went to the right, and the other to the left of the Quarries. The reserve consisted of 600 men. The Russians fought desperately."

A further week was occupied with a heavy but desultory bombardment, but at last on 17th June what is known as "the fourth bombardment" proper began, and after it had continued for about twenty-four hours, orders were given for the assault to be made by the French on the Malakoff and the English on the Redan on the 18th June, a date ever memorable in military annals. The silence of the Russian guns induced a belief that the allied fire had overpowered theirs, and in consequence orders for the attack were given twenty-four hours sooner than had been intended. Kinglake, in his exhaustive History, has shown how this acted adversely on the chances of the assault, because the Russian gunners had really only reserved their fire, and also especially because the Redan, which we had to attack under the original arrangement between Lord Raglan and General Pelissier, had hardly suffered any damage from the bombardment. General Gordon's long account of this memorable assault will long be referred to as a striking individual experience:—

"I must now commence my long story of our attempted assault. To take up my account from 14th June, which was the last letter I wrote to you, Seeley, my fellow-subaltern at Pembroke, arrived on the 15th, and joined the right. On the evening of the 16th it was rumoured we were to commence firing again in the morning. I was on duty on the morning of the 17th, and I went down at half-past two A.M. At 3 A.M. all our batteries opened, and throughout the day kept up a terrific fire. The Russians answered slowly, and after a time their guns almost ceased. I mentioned in my report that I thought they were reserving their fire. [If this view had only been taken by the Generals, especially Pelissier, a dreadful waste of life would have been averted, and the result might have proved a brilliant success.] We did not lose many men. I remained in the trenches until 7 P.M.—rather a long spell—and on coming up dined, and found an order to be at the night attack at twelve midnight on June 17 and 18. I was attached to Bent's column, with Lieutenants Murray and Graham, R.E., and we were to go into the Redan at the Russians' right flank. Another column, under Captain de Moleyns and Lieutenants Donnelly and

James, R.E., was to go in at the angle of the salient; and another under Captain Jesse, Lieutenants Fisher and Graves, was to go in at the Russian left flank. We passed along in our relative positions up to the advanced trench, which is 200 yards from the Redan, where we halted until the signal for the attack should be given from the eight-gun battery, where Lord Raglan, Sir G. Brown, and General Jones were.

"About 3 A.M. the French advanced on the Malakoff Tower in three columns, and ten minutes after this our signal was given. The Russians then opened with a fire of grape, which was terrific. They mowed down our men in dozens, and the trenches, being confined, were crowded with men, who foolishly kept in them instead of rushing over the parapet of our trenches, and by coming forward in a mass, trusting to some of them at least being able to pass through untouched to the Redan, where of course, once they arrived, the artillery could not reach them, and every yard nearer would have diminished the effect of the grape by giving it less space for spreading. We could then have moved up our supports and carried the place.

"Unfortunately, however, our men dribbled out of the ends of the trenches, ten and twenty at a time, and as soon as they appeared they were cleared away. Some hundred men, under Lieutenant Fisher, got up to the abattis, but were not supported, and consequently had to retire.

"About this time the French were driven from the Malakoff Tower, which I do not think they actually entered, and Lord Raglan very wisely would not renew the assault, as the Redan could not be held with the Malakoff Tower in the hands of the Russians. Murray, poor fellow, went out with the skirmishers of our column—he in red, and they in green. He was not out a minute when he was carried back with his arm shattered with grape. Colonel Tylden called for me, and asked me to look after him, which I did, and as I had a tourniquet in my pocket I put it on. He bore it bravely, and I got a stretcher and had him taken back. He died three hours afterwards. I am glad to say that Dr Bent reports he did not die from loss of blood, but from the shock, not being very strong.

"A second after Murray had gone to the rear, poor Tylden, struck by grape in the legs, was carried back, and although very much depressed in spirits he is doing well. Jesse was killed at the abattis—shot through the head—and Graves was killed further in advance than any one. We now sat still waiting for orders, and the Russians amusing themselves by shelling us from mortars. When we appeared, the Russians lined their parapets as thick as possible, and seemed to be expecting us to come on. They flew two flags on the Malakoff Tower the whole time in defiance of us. About ten o'clock some of the regiments got orders

to retire. We, the Royal Engineers, however, stayed until twelve o'clock, when we were told that the assault was not to be renewed, and that we could go. Thus ended our assault, of the result of which we felt so sure. The first plan made was that we should fire for three hours and go in at six o'clock, but the French changed it, and would not wait until we had silenced the enemy's artillery fire, and so we attacked at 3 A.M. My father can tell the effect of grape from twelve 68-pounders and 32 pounders at 200 yards upon a column; but whatever may be the effect, I am confident that if we had left the trenches in a mass, some of us would have survived and reached the Redan, which, once reached, the Highland Brigade and Guards would have carried all before them, and the place would have fallen. General Jones was struck by a stone in the forehead, but not much hurt. I believe it is said that the trenches were too high to get over. As the scaling-ladders were carried over them, this can hardly be sustained. So much for *our* assault.

"Now for the assault which was made from the left attack. General Eyre had an order given him to make a feint at the head of the creek if we were successful at the Redan; however, at five o'clock, when we had failed at the Redan, we heard a very sharp attack on the head of the creek. The 44th and other regiments advanced, drove the Russians out of a rifle-pit they held near the cemetery, and entered some houses there. The Russians then opened a tremendous fire on the houses, and the men took shelter in line, being under no command, their own officers not knowing where they were to go, or anything about the place, and no Engineer officer being with them. The men sheltered themselves in the houses until they were knocked about their ears. They then remained in different places—in fact, wherever they could get any shelter, until dusk, as, if they had attempted to retire, they would have been all destroyed. The men of General Eyre's column found lots of drink in the houses. Our losses in the four columns are—1400 killed and wounded, 64 officers wounded, and 16 killed. The French lost 6000 killed and wounded, they say! Nothing has occurred since the assault, but it is determined to work forward by sap and mine!"

In a subsequent letter he wrote: "Remember, in spite of all the absurd reports in the papers, that our troops never once passed the abattis in front of the Redan, which is sixty yards from it, and that we have never spiked a gun of the Russians," and before closing his narrative account of the Redan, the passage in which Mr Kinglake refers to Gordon's evidence and action on this eventful day may well be quoted. It appears from his statement that Gordon lost his temper through excitement at the repulse, and even upbraided and used angry language to his old friend and comrade, Lieutenant, now General Sir Gerald,

Graham, on his coming back to the trenches. Such language, it may be pointed out, could not have been used with less justice to any soldier taking part in the assault than to the man who had carried a ladder farther than anyone else, and twice endeavoured to place it against the Redan. It illustrates the perfervid zeal and energy of the young officer, who explained in his letters home how he thought the Russian fortress might have been carried at a rush, and appropriately introduces the passage in which Mr Kinglake records his opinion of Gordon :

"This impassioned lieutenant of sappers was a soldier marked out for strange destinies, no other than Gordon—Charles Gordon—then ripening into a hero, sublimely careless of self, and a warrior saint of the kind that Moslems rather than Christians are fondly expecting from God."

I cannot refrain from quoting here a letter I received from Mr Kinglake when I sent him a copy of my edition of "General Gordon's Letters from the Crimea," etc., as it records a somewhat more deliberate opinion on his character and career :—

"28 HYDE PARK PLACE,
"MARBLE ARCH, W., 27*th July* 1884.

"DEAR SIR,—I indeed feel greatly obliged to you for your kindness in sending me a copy of 'General Gordon's Letters from the Crimea.'

"Already I have read a great part of the volume, and I need hardly say that, apart from the reasons which link me to the Crimea, I have been greatly interested by seeing what was thought, and felt, and expressed in his early days by this really phenomenal man, whose romantic elevation above all that is base and common has made him, in even these days, a sort of warlike and heroic Redeemer.

"Your Preface well and ably expresses an opinion that is widely entertained as to the conduct of our Government towards Gordon, and I don't know enough of the question to be able to gainsay your conclusion, but it would seem at first glance that, considering the imperative reasons, the vast distances, the changeful condition of things, and the consequent changes of mind, the task of doing justice between the Government and this heroic envoy would be one of some complexity. With my repeated thanks,—I remain, dear sir, very truly yours,

"A. W. KINGLAKE."

Ten days after the repulse at the Redan, Lord Raglan, the gallant soldier over whose bier Pelissier wept like a child, died "of wear and tear and general debility," as Gordon put it, and the siege again entered upon another dull and uninteresting stage. Nearly three months

were to elapse before the capture of the fortress that had resisted so long, and the only incident of marked importance during that period was the battle of the Tchernaya, in which the officers in the trenches had no part. In that action the last effort of the Russian commanders to relieve the place and extricate Todleben from his peril was repulsed by the whole allied forces, for in this engagement both the Italians and Turks took part, with a loss of seven or eight thousand men. The only comment Gordon makes on the action is that "the Sardinians behaved very well." At last, on 8th September, a second general assault was delivered, the English again attacking the Redan, and, more fortunate in one sense than on the earlier occasion, effected a lodgment in the fortress, but were then driven out with heavy loss. But the French succeeded in storming and holding the Malakoff, which commanded the Redan, and the Russians retired to the northern side of the harbour during the night after blowing up their ships. The fall of Sebastopol, especially after the doubts held and expressed in July and August as to whether the siege would not have to be raised, caused the greatest excitement and widespread satisfaction. General Gordon sent home the following graphic description of this final and at last successful attack :—

"I must now endeavour to give you my idea of our operations from the eventful 8th of September to the present 16th. We knew on the 7th that it was intended that the French should assault the Malakoff Tower at twelve the next day, and that we and another column of the French should attack the Redan and central bastion. The next day proved windy and dusty, and at ten o'clock began one of the most tremendous bombardments ever seen or heard. We had kept up a tolerable fire for the last four days, quite warm enough; but for two hours this tremendous fire extending six miles was maintained. At twelve the French rushed at the Malakoff, took it with ease, having caught the defenders in their bomb-proof houses, where they had gone to escape from the shells, etc. They found it difficult work to get round to the Little Redan, as the Russians had by that time got out of their holes.

"However, the Malakoff was won, and the tricolour was hoisted as a signal for our attack. Our men went forward well, losing apparently few, put the ladders in the ditch, and mounted on the salient of the Redan, but though they stayed there five minutes or more, they did not advance, and tremendous reserves coming up drove them out. They retired well and without disorder, losing in all 150 officers, 2400 men killed and wounded. We should have carried everything before us if the men had only advanced. The French got driven back with great loss at the

central bastion, losing four general officers. They did not enter the work. Thus, after a day of intense excitement, we had only gained the Malakoff. It was determined that night that the Highlanders should storm the Redan the next morning.

"I was detailed for the trenches, but during the night I heard terrible explosions, and going down to the trenches at 4 A.M. I saw a splendid sight—the whole town in flames, and every now and then a terrific explosion. The rising sun shining on the scene of destruction produced a beautiful effect. The last of the Russians were leaving the town over the bridge. All the three-deckers, etc., were sunk, the steamers alone remaining. Tons and tons of powder must have been blown up.

"About eight o'clock I got an order to commence a plan of the works, for which purpose I went to the Redan, where a dreadful sight was presented. The dead were buried in the ditch—the Russians with the English—Mr Wright reading the Service over them. About ten o'clock Fort Paul was blown up—a beautiful sight. The town was not safe to be entered on account of the fire and the few Russians who still prowled about. The latter cut off the hands and feet of one Frenchman. They also caught and took away a sapper who would go *trying* to plunder—for as to plunder there was and is literally nothing but rubbish and fleas, the Russians having carried off everything else. I have got the lock and sight off a gun (which used to try and deposit its contents very often in my carcass, in which I am grateful to say it failed) for my father, and some other rubbish (a Russian cup, etc.) for you and my sisters. But you would be surprised at the extraordinary rarity of knick-knacks. They left their pictures in the churches, which form consequently the only spoil, and which I do not care about buying. I will do my best to get some better things if it is possible. On the 10th we got down to the docks, and a flag of truce came over to ask permission to take away their wounded from the hospital, which we had only found out that day contained 3000 wounded men. These unfortunate men had been for a day and a half without attendance. A fourth of them were dead, and the rest were in a bad way. I will not dwell any more on it, but could not imagine a more dreadful sight.

"We have now got into the town, the conflagration being out, and it seems quite strange to hear no firing. It has been a splendid city, and the harbour is magnificent. We have taken more than 4000 guns, destroyed their fleet, immense stores of provisions, ammunition, etc. (for from the explosions they did not appear to be short of it), and shall destroy the dockyard, forts, quays, barracks, storehouses, etc. For guns, Woolwich is a joke to it. The town is strewn with our shell and shot, etc. We have traced voltaic wires to nearly every powder

magazine in the place. What plucky troops they were! When you hear the details of the siege you will be astonished. The length of the siege is nothing in comparison with our gain in having destroyed the place.

"We are not certain what the Russians are doing on the north side, and as yet do not know whether we shall follow them up or not. We ought to, I think. It is glorious going over their horrid batteries which used to bully us so much. Their dodges were infinite. Most of their artillerymen, being sailors, were necessarily handy men, and had devised several ingenious modes of riveting, which they found very necessary. There was a vineyard under our attack, a sort of neutral ground where no one dared to venture, either Russian or English. We found lots of ripe grapes there. The Russians used to fire another description of grape into it. One night I was working with a party at this very spot, and out of 200 men we lost 30 killed and wounded. We are engaged in clearing the roads, burning the rubbish, and deodorizing the town, taking account of the guns, etc. Nothing is stirring; the Russians fire a little into the town. We hear they are retreating, but do not believe it. The French, it seems, took the Malakoff by surprise. They had learnt from a deserter that the Russians used to march one relief of men out of the place before the other came in on account of the heavy fire; whilst this was being done the French rushed in and found the Malakoff empty. The Russians made three attempts to retake it, the last led by a large body of officers alone. Whenever the Russians commenced a battery they laid down first a line of wires to the magazine with which they could blow it up at any time."

With this final tribute to the courage of the Russian garrison, Charles Gordon's account of the siege and fall of Sebastopol closes. He took part in the expedition to Kimburn, when General Spencer commanded a joint force of 9000 men intended to dislodge the Russians from a fort they had built at that place, and also to attack a corps of 10,000 men supposed to be stationed at the important town of Kherson. The fort surrendered after four hours' bombardment by the fleet—the garrison not being "the same style of soldiers as the Sebastopol men"—but the Kherson force was never encountered, retiring as the allies advanced, who in their turn retired for fear of being drawn too far into the country. In one of several letters while on this expedition Gordon says that the Czar Alexander the Second was near Kimburn during the attack, and that he sent the Governor a telegram, "Remember Holy Russia," which the Russian General did by getting drunk. The expedition was then withdrawn after installing a French garrison in the fort, and Charles Gordon returned to his old quarters

before Sebastopol. A fortnight after his arrival he was appointed to take part in the destruction of the docks, which was to signalise the downfall of Russia's power in the Black Sea. This closing episode is very well described in several of his letters written during the month of December 1855:—

"I am now, as you see, stationed in the dockyard preparing the shafts and galleries for the demolition of the docks. The French will destroy one half and ourselves the other. The quantity of powder we shall use is 45,000 lbs., in charges varying from 80 lbs. to 8000 lbs. The French do not sink their shafts so deep as we do, but use heavier charges. The docks are very well made, and the gates alone cost £23,000. We are taking one gate to London, and the French another to Paris. Our shafts are some of them very deep, and in others there are from eight to ten feet of water. There is not much prospect of the Russians leaving the north side. We can see them hutting themselves. . . . . Our works at the docks approach completion, and we hope to blow up some portion of them on Saturday. The French blew up one last Saturday. The explosion presented a splendid appearance and succeeded admirably, not a stone being left standing. The powder for our demolition will be upwards of twenty-two tons. The Russians still (27th December) hold the north forts, and do not appear to be likely to leave this year as their huts are all built. We can see them quite distinctly on the other side. . . . . *January* 20, 1856.—We have blown up part of our docks, and are very busy with the remainder, which we hope to get over by the end of the month. I do not anticipate any movement of the army until March, when I suppose we shall go to Asia to relieve Kars, and make the Russians retire from the Turkish territory. . . . . *February* 3, 1856.—We all of us have been extremely busy in loading and firing our mines in the docks, which required all our time, as we were so very short of officers, having only three, while the French had twelve. Our force of sappers was only 150 and the French had 600. We have now finished the demolition, which is satisfactory as far as the effects produced are concerned; but having used the voltaic battery instead of the old-fashioned hose, we have found that electricity will not succeed in large operations like this, and I do not think that anyone will use it if there is a possibility of using hose. I am now engaged in making plans of the docks, and have not much time to myself. The French have done their work very well, using more powder than we, and firing all their mines with hose. I will try and get you a photograph of the docks as they *were* and as they *are*, which will tell you more than a dozen letters would. We had an alarm down here the other

night about twelve o'clock. The Russians on the north side opened a tremendous fire throughout the whole line on us and on the French. We were all out under arms, expecting an attack by boats, but after being well shelled for an hour, the Russians left off, and all was again silent; but for the time it lasted the fire was terrific. I heard afterwards that it was caused by a French navy captain, who pulled over to the other side of the harbour, and tried to burn a steamer which was lying on its side. He and his companions arrived unperceived, found the steamer quite new, and were getting into it, when the Russian sentinel challenged. They answered 'Russe,' but the sentry called 'To arms,' and the Russians fired into the boat, and then continued the fire from all their guns, I suppose expecting a grand attack. Only one man, however, was hurt by a splinter on the arm. The French will blow up Fort Nicholas on Monday. They only got their order the night before last, and are obliged to make a hasty demolition of it. They will use 105,000 lbs. of powder in the demolition. The Russians had ruined this fort, but had not had time to put in the powder; the excavations were complete. It certainly is a splendid fort, mounting 128 guns, and capitally finished for barracks. It would hold 6000 men. The Russians evidently intended this to be an exceptionally strong place, and they appear to have been making a quay all the way round the dockyard creek. We have seen a great deal of the French engineers; they are older men than ours, and seem well educated. The non-commissioned officers are much more intelligent than our men. With us, although our men are not stupid, the officers have to do a good deal of work which the French sapper non-commissioned officer does. They all understand line of least resistance, etc., and what they are about. The Russians do not molest us much now. We can hear them call out and sing, especially on Sundays. We can see them drill, which they do every day. They even have the coolness to go out and fish in the harbour. We never fire, neither do the French. I do not think they purpose leaving the north side; in fact, it would not be at all wise of them to do so. We had some French engineers to dine with us the other day; they were very agreeable, and we learnt a great deal from them about their mining. They used to hear the Russians mining within ten feet of them, and when they did this they used to put in their powder as quick as possible and blow in the Russian mines. The Russians had two systems or layers of mines, one about ten feet below the surface of the ground and the other about forty feet. The French only knew of the higher one, and they found out after the place was taken that their advanced trenches were quite mined and loaded in the lower tier. In the Bastion du Mât there

were no less than thirty-six mines loaded and tamped. I saw one myself in the upper tier when I was surveying it. They (the Russians) worked out a strata of clay between two layers of rock, so that no wood was required to keep the earth from falling in."

Soon after these letters a truce was concluded with the Russians in anticipation of the peace which was ultimately signed at Paris in March 1856. The prospects of peace were not altogether agreeable to the English army, which had been raised to an effective strength of more than 40,000 men, and was never in a better condition for war than at the end of the two years since it first landed in the Chersonese. Gordon's correspondence contains two or three remarks, giving characteristic evidence to the strength and extent of this sentiment.

In one passage he says: "We do not, generally speaking, like the thought of peace until after another campaign. I shall not go to England, but expect I shall remain abroad for three or four years, which *individually* I would sooner spend in war than peace. There is something indescribably exciting in the former."

Another comment to the same effect is the following: "Suders, the Russian General, reviewed us and the French army last week. He must have thought our making peace odd."

Gordon did not obtain any honour or promotion for his Crimean services. He was included in Sir Harry Jones's list of Engineer Subalterns who had specially distinguished themselves during the siege. The French Government, more discerning than his own, awarded him the Legion of Honour.

The letters from the Crimea are specially interesting for the light they throw on General Gordon's character. They illustrate better than anything else he wrote during his career the soldierly side of his character. The true professional spirit of the man of war peers forth in every sentence, and his devotion to the details of his work was a good preparatory course for that great campaign in China where his engineering skill, not less than his military genius, was so conspicuously shown. As a subaltern in the Crimea Gordon showed himself zealous, daring, vigilant, and with that profound national feeling that an army of Englishmen was the finest fighting force in the world, combined with an inner conviction that of that army his kindred Highlanders were the most intrepid and leading cohort. This was a far more attractive and comprehensible personality than the other revealed in later days, of the Biblical pedant seeking to reconcile passing events with ancient Jewish prophecies, and to see in the most ordinary occurrences the workings of a resistless and unalterable fate. That was not the true

Gordon, but rather the grafting of a new character on the original stem of Spartan simplicity and heroism. But to the very end of his career, to the last message from Khartoum, the old Gordon—the real Gordon, the one who will never be forgotten—revealed himself just as he was in the trenches before Sebastopol.

Gordon's connection with the Russian War and the Eastern Question did not terminate with the Treaty of Paris. On 10th May he received orders to join Colonel Stanton, for the purpose of assisting in the delimitation of the new frontier in Bessarabia. He imagined that the work would take six months; it really took a year. A not unimportant principle was involved in this question, and an error in a map was nearly securing for the Russians a material advantage. At the Paris Congress it was determined to eloin the Russians from the Danube and its tributary lakes and streams. The Powers therefore stated that the Russian frontier should pass south of Bolgrad, judging from the small scale-map supplied by the Russians that Bolgrad was north of Lake Yalpukh, which opens into the river Danube. When the Boundary Commission came on the ground, they found that Bolgrad was on Lake Yalpukh, and that if the frontier passed to the south of it the Russians would have access to the Danube; and therefore, knowing the spirit of the Treaty, the English Commissioners referred the question to the Paris Congress. A sketch was prepared by Gordon and his colleagues, to show the diplomatists its exact position, and led to the frontier being laid down north of Bolgrad and Lake Yalpukh. Austria, as well as France, Turkey, and Russia, was represented on this Commission, and Gordon's comrade was Lieutenant, afterward General Sir Henry, James, who had served with him in the trenches, and who had one day lost his way and walked into the Russian lines, as Gordon himself had so nearly done.

Gordon's letters give an interesting account of his work, and bring out with his usual clearness all the points at issue; but it is unnecessary to follow very closely the events of the year he passed in the lower Danube region. How excellent his work must have been can be judged from the fact that the Government sent him back some years later to act as British Consul at Galatz. The delimitation work commenced with a personal inspection of the frontier from Katamori on the Pruth to Boma Sola on the Black Sea, a distance of 200 miles. Then the frontier was defined on the map, and finally it had to be marked on the ground with the usual posts and distinctive marks. Thirty-two separate plans had to be prepared before the frontier could be adjusted, and the frequent bickerings and quarrels gave rise to many surmises that the negotiations might be broken off and hostilities ensue. The main point of dispute as to Bolgrad threatened to form a *casus belli* with even a new arrange-

ment of the Powers, as France gave up the case, and thus encouraged Russia to prove more obdurate. But England and the other Powers stood firm, and Bolgrad was included in Moldavia.

The following extracts give a tolerably complete account of what was done. Writing from Kichenief on 9th January 1857, Gordon said:

"We are now settled as to the frontier question. Russia has given up Bolgrad and received a portion of territory in exchange equal to that surrendered, both as to number of inhabitants and also as to extent of land. This mode of compensation will give us more than half our work to do over again. I had almost finished my plans, and one-half of these will have to be redrawn. However, it is a consolation to know that the thing is settled. We heard all this by telegraph from Paris, and by the same message learnt that we are to proceed at once to work on the frontier in order to get it finished by 30th March, and thus allow of the ceded territory being handed over to the Moldavians on that day. You may imagine what a hurry they are in to get this finished. The Russians pretend to believe that they have got the best of the dispute, but it will be difficult to persuade the world to be of the same opinion. Although so cold, there is not much snow, and it is beautifully clear weather, capital for sledging. The new frontier leaves Tobak and Bolgrad in Moldavia, and gives a piece of land near the Pruth in exchange to Russia. . . . The territory will be given over in two parts. The southern consists of Ismail, Kilia, Reni, and Bolgrad, as well as the delta of the Danube. The northern part consists of the land between the Pruth and Yalpukh. . . . We have finished our work, everything has been signed, and the total number of the plans we have made is upwards of 100. For my part, I have had enough of them for my whole life."

This wish was not to be gratified, for before Colonel Stanton's Commission was dissolved orders came for him to hand over his officers and men to Colonel — now Field-Marshal Sir Lintorn— Simmons, for the purpose of settling the boundary in Armenia, where a dispute had arisen about the course of the river Aras, the ancient Araxes. Gordon, who had now had two and a half years of foreign service without a break, did not relish this task, and even went to the expense of telegraphing for permission to exchange; but this effort was in vain, for the laconic reply of the Commander-in-Chief was: "Lieutenant Gordon must go." If Gordon had under-estimated the time required for the Bessarabian delimitation, he slightly over-estimated that for the Armenian, as his anticipated two years was diminished in the result to twenty-one months.

He left Constantinople on 1st May 1857 on board a Turkish steamer, *Kars*, bound for Trebizonde. The ship was overcrowded

with dirty passengers, and the voyage was disagreeable, and might have been dangerous if the weather had not proved exceptionally favourable. On arriving at Trebizonde horses had to be engaged for the ten days' journey across the 180 miles of difficult country separating that port from Erzeroum, the Armenian capital. The total caravan of the English and French Commissioners—the latter being Colonel Pelissier, a relative of the Marshal—numbered ninety-nine horses; and the Turkish Commissioner, being unable to obtain any money from his Government, seized the horses necessary for his journey in a manner that first opened Gordon's eyes to the ways of Pashas. He stopped on the road every caravan he met, threw off their goods, put on his own, and impounded the animals for his journey. After a brief stay at Erzeroum—which Gordon describes as a very pretty place at a distance, but horribly dirty when entered, and where there are eight or nine months of very hard winter—the Commission passed on to Kars, which became its headquarters. The heroic defence of that fortress was then recent, and it is still of sufficient interest as a military episode to justify the quotation of the evidence Gordon, with his charactistic desire to be well informed, collected on the spot while the events themselves were fresh. For convenience' sake, his remarks on Kars and the whole campaign are strung together here, although they appeared in several letters:—

"Kars is, as you can easily imagine, a ruined city, and may perhaps never recover its former strength and importance. As far as the works of defence are concerned, they are excessively badly traced. A little pamphlet published by Kmety, a Hungarian, gives a graphic description of the siege. One thing difficult if not impossible to realise without seeing it, is the large extent of the position. Kars has been twice in the hands of the Russians during the last thirty years, Paskievitch having taken it by assault in 1829. We passed the battle-field at Kuyukdere, where the Russians in very small force under Bebutoff were attacked by a very superior force of Turks, under the direction of General Guyon, the Hungarian. By some mistake the Turkish left lost its way during the night, and was eight miles distant from the field when the right came into action. The battle was very hotly contested, but the Turks had at last to retire with the loss of several guns. Had the affair gone off as Guyon* intended, the Russians would have been licked. This battle, I should add, was

* Guyon was an Englishman, but one of the National Commanders in the Hungarian Rebellion of 1848. I have given a brief account of his adventurous career at pp. 148-49 of "General Gordon's Letters from the Crimea," etc.

fought in August 1854, before any English officer had arrived in this country. The Russian loss was very severe: there were 3,200 wounded alone brought into Gumri for treatment. The first day from Gumri we passed Baiandoor, where the Turks and Russians had a small battle in 1853, and where the former lost a splendid opportunity of taking Gumri, which was nearly denuded of troops. My Turkish colleague, Osman Bey (I believe this officer to be identical with Ghazi Osman, the defender of Plevna), was present, and got into Gumri as a spy, disguised in the character of a servant. The Russian army avenged the slight check they received from the Turks by taking all their artillery of the right wing."

As illustrating his professional zeal and powers of scientific examination, the following description of the fortress of Alexandropol or Gumri is a striking production from so young an officer:—

"The fortress of Alexandropol (40° 47′ N. lat., 43° long. 45′ E., 4500 feet above the sea) is situated on the left bank of the river Arpatchai, which here forms the boundary between Russia and Turkey. It is distant thirty-five miles from Kars and eighty-four miles from Tiflis. The plain on which it is situated is perfectly level and very peculiar. It has a stratum of alluvial soil for the depth of one foot six inches on the surface, and then a substratum of fine uniform lava, ten to fifteen feet thick, supposed to have issued from Mount Alagos (13,450 feet), an extinct volcano thirty miles from Alexandropol. The depth of the earth allows the growth of grain, but entirely prevents that of trees, which with their roots cannot penetrate into the lava. The Russians have taken advantage of this bed of lava in the ditch of the fortress. The fortress is well constructed and in perfect repair. There are upwards of 200 guns (varying from 36-pounders to 12-pounders) mounted on the works, and about 100 in reserve, of which 30 are field-guns with their equipment wagons, etc. The garrison would be 5000 to 6000, including artillery. There are large supplies of ammunition and military stores. The ditch, twelve feet deep, of the two western fronts has not been excavated near the flanks on account of the expense. The Russians have constructed in the centres of the two curtains a *caponnière* with two guns in each flank to defend the dead angles caused by the non-excavation of the whole of the ditch. In the centre of these two fronts is a large *caponnière*, mounting ten guns in the upper tier and eight in the lower tier. This *caponnière* is on a lower level than the enceinte of the place. The counterscarp at the north-west and south-west angles of these two fronts is for the distance of twenty yards composed of a crenellated wall four feet six inches thick. This was caused by the irregularity of the ground. The bomb-proof barracks of

the northern fronts mount in casemate two tiers of fourteen guns at the curtains. The flanks have five guns in casemates open to the rear, in addition to the guns on the parapet above. The lunette in the ditch is eight feet deep. The eastern front has an escarp fourteen feet high cut in the lava, and well flanked by the *caponnière* defending the entrances, mounting four guns. The bomb-proof barracks in the northern fronts have one tier of eight guns in casemate at the curtains, and three guns in each flank in casemates open to the rear. The two outworks are closed at the gorge with a loopholed wall, flanked by a small guard-house. They have no ditches, but an escarp of ten feet in the lava. The tower marked *A* in my plan is sixty yards in diameter, with a well in the centre. It has its gorge closed with a ditch and loopholed wall. It mounts fifteen guns on the top, and fifteen guns in casemate. It is proposed to connect it by a crenellated wall with the main work. The tower marked *B* has a ditch and small glacis. It mounts eight guns in casemate, and eight on the top. Its object is to flank the long ravine which runs southward from it. All the buildings in the interior of the fortress are bomb-proof. The great fault of the fortress as it is constructed at present is that it does not so much as see the town with its population of 9310. It is now proposed, however, to make a large work on the site marked *K* with a view of meeting this want. During the war in 1853, when the Turks were 35,000 strong at Baiandoor, six miles from Alexandropol, and the Russians had only two battalions in the fortress, the latter demolished all the houses which were on this ground. I think that should it ever be in our power to besiege this place (which is not likely, from the enormous difficulty of getting a siege train there), that batteries might be established on the hillocks between the fortress and the river, to breach the large *caponnière* and the tower *A* which, from the formation of the ground, would not be opposed by more fire than the direct fire of the works they were intended to breach, and which would be limited by their circular form to about seven guns. The soil is not unfavourable on these hills. The hill on which the cemetery of the officers killed at Kars and Kuyukdere is situated is also favourable for batteries. The principal well, which is sunk to a good depth, is in the north-eastern bastion."

General Gordon's letters contain two or three interesting descriptions that, in view of more recent events, deserve quotation. Of the Kurds he thus speaks, and the description stands good at the present day :—

"We met on our road a great number of Kurds, who live as their fathers did, by travelling about, robbing, etc., with their flocks. Their

children are short of clothing. In spite of the Cossacks, etc., they are as lawless as ever, and go from Turkey to Russia and back again as they like. They are fine-looking people, armed to the teeth, but are decreasing in numbers. They never live in houses, but prefer tents and caves. On the mountains we fell in with the tribes of Kurds, who live at this height during the summer months, quite isolated from the rest of mankind. I paid a visit to the chief of a tribe of 2000, and he passed a great number of compliments on the English. This Bey is all powerful with his tribe; he settles all disputes, divides the pasture land among the families, etc. Although living in such a deserted spot, they read the Turkish papers, and they asked several questions about the English war with Persia. They are very fanatical, and are much encouraged in their religious fervour by the Sultan's agents. Their houses consist of stone walls covered with camel's-hair tents, which are quite waterproof, and lined inside with capital carpets made by themselves. We encamped near them and obtained our milk, etc., from them; but, in order to let us know their habits, they stole the horse of the Russian officer's interpreter during the night. I should not mind trusting them at all, for the Bey would not allow them to take our horses; perhaps this was only from his hatred to the Russians."

He gives some particulars of the Lazes, to one of whose villages he paid a visit, and as he believed that he was the only Englishman who had ever done so, his remarks were based on special local knowledge:—

"On one side of it was Lazistan, and this part of Lazistan is peopled by the fiercest tribe of Lazes, who scarcely acknowledge even the Sultan. We had an escort of forty infantry, and were not molested. This tribe and the Kabouletians supply the Constantinople Turks with slaves, whom they kidnap from the Gourelians, who are on the Russian side. The Adjars (the tribe referred to) are most daring, and even proposed to us to bring any person we might choose out to Batoum for £40 to £120. In consequence of these kidnappings, etc., a deadly enmity exists between the two peoples, and whenever they get a chance they kill one another. During the last eighteen months sixty-two people have been kidnapped, sixteen killed, and twenty or thirty wounded on the part of the Gourelians. The Russian guards of the frontier are helpless against these people, for the latter are armed with a capital rifle and are also splendid shots, while the Cossacks have only a trumpery smooth bore. The country of the Adjars is very mountainous indeed, and quite impracticable except on foot, being covered with dense forests."

Of Ani, the ancient, once famous, and now deserted capital of Armenia, he gives the following picture:—

"We passed through Ani, the ancient capital of Armenia. This city is completely deserted, and has splendid churches still standing in it. These churches are capitally built and preserved. Some coloured drawings on their walls are to be seen even now. The towers and walls are almost intact, but the most extraordinary thing about so large a place is the singular quietness. There are many ruined cities in the neighbourhood, and all dating from about the eleventh century. At that period Ani itself contained 100,000 inhabitants and 500 churches, which shows that more people went to church among them than with us. Before the end of that century it passed into the hands of the Greeks and Saracens. Afterwards the Mongols took it, and at last an earthquake drove out the remaining inhabitants in 1339, since which time it has been perfectly deserted. The churches of Ani were built with lava, and crosses of black lava were let in very curiously into the red lava. With the exception of the churches and the king's palace, the city is level with the ground, the foundations of the houses being alone discernible. These churches were covered with Armenian inscriptions cut on the walls."

The delimitation work in itself was uninteresting, being carried on in barren and solitary regions where there was nothing but rock, without either grass or inhabitants. Gordon said he would not take thirty square miles for a gift, and yet the Turks and Russians clung to it, bringing witnesses from among the tribes who would swear whatever they were paid for. The question at issue was where the old frontier between the Persian province of Erivan and the Pashalik of Baizeth was fixed. The Persians ceded the province of Erivan to Russia in 1828, and both the Turks and Russians had their own, and necessarily conflicting, views as to where the frontier was. General Gordon's own belief that there had never been any real frontier at all was no doubt the right one. The English officers, without any assistance from their Turkish colleagues, who merely looked on when they were not keeping up the supply of witnesses, had to effect the best arrangement they could with the Russians. In the course of his survey of the frontier, which he said he examined almost foot by foot, Gordon came to Mount Ararat, which he very nearly ascended, as he tells the reader in the following graphic narrative:—

"When we arrived at the foot of Mount Ararat we were unable to proceed along the frontier any further because the ground becomes extremely broken by the innumerable streams of lava which have run down from it. The ground is black with cinders. They look as if quite recently emitted, and no one would imagine from their appearance that Ararat had been extinct so long. Our road went along the northern

or Russian slope of Ararat, and passed through a very old city called Kourgai, where there are still the remains of a church and part of an old castle. Even the Armenians do not pretend to know its history, but some of them say that Noah lived there. It is situated half-way up the mountain, and there is no living person within twelve miles of it. There used to be a populous village named Aralik, with 5000 inhabitants, a little above it, but in 1840 an earthquake shook Mount Ararat, and in four minutes an immense avalanche had buried this place so completely as to leave scarcely any vestige of its site. Not a single person escaped, which is not to be wondered at, considering the mass that fell. Stones of twenty or thirty tons were carried as far as fifteen to twenty miles into the plain. It has left a tremendous cleft in Ararat itself. Other villages were destroyed at the same time, but none so completely as this. The village immediately below Aralik was also destroyed, but the graveyard remained untouched, and the tombstones stand up intact in the midst of the ruins. The common people say that it was saved on account of a saint who was buried there. All these places have a very lonely look. Both the Kurds and the Armenians, if they can possibly help it, never pass near Mount Ararat, while they think it a great sin to ascend it.

"I must now tell you of my ascent, or rather my near ascent, of Great Ararat.

"I and my interpreter and three sappers went up to a Kurdish encampment where an old Kurd lived who assisted five of our countrymen to ascend about two years ago. The only assistance, however, that he appeared able to give us was to show us where these Englishmen had encamped the night before their ascent. We consequently pitched our tents there, and settled ourselves for the night. The night proved to be very stormy, with thunder and rain, which was a bad lookout for us. However, we started at 4 A.M. the next morning, and had some very hard work up to the line of perpetual snow. My interpreter and two of the sappers gave it up before this, but I and the other, Corporal Fisher, held on.

"The whole of this time there was a thick fog, which now and then cleared away, though only for brief moments, and enabled us to get a splendid view of the country spread out as a map beneath us, with cumuli clouds floating about. The snow which I mounted was at a very steep slope, and quite hard, nearly ice, on the surface. It was so steep that we could not sit down without holding on tightly to our poles. Corporal Fisher was about half a mile to my left, and had a better ascent as it was not quite so steep. About two o'clock I began to get very tired, not able to get up more than two yards

without resting. This was caused by the rarefication of the air. The mist cleared just at this time for a minute, and I was enabled to see the summit about 1000 feet above me, but still a further very steep ascent. Little Ararat was also visible 3000 feet below me. It began to snow soon after this, and became intensely cold. The two together settled me, and I turned round, although very reluctantly, and sitting down, slid over in a very few minutes the distance which had taken me so many hours to clamber up. Corporal Fisher managed to get up to the top, and describes the crater to be very shallow, although the top is very large. The Kurd told me afterwards that the road I took was very difficult, and that the other English explorers went up a road which was comparatively easy. I believe, however, that if the weather had been more favourable I should have succeeded."

This was not his only mountaineering experience. Some weeks later he ascended Mount Alagos—that is, the Motley Mount, from its various colours. It is 13,480 feet above the sea, or about 3000 feet lower than Ararat.

"We started with some Kurdish guides to the mountain, and after a good deal of delay got to the place where the only path to the summit commences. Here we were obliged to dismount and take to our legs. After about two hours and a half we got to the summit, and were extremely glad of it, for although it is not to be compared to Mount Ararat, it is still rather difficult. Trusting to my Ararat experience, I thought of descending in the snow, and started. I was much astonished at finding the slope far steeper than I expected, and consequently went down like a shot, and reached the bottom one hour and a half before the others. A Russian doctor tried it after me, and in trying to change his direction was turned round, and went to the bottom sometimes head foremost. He was not a bit hurt. There was no danger, as we had only to keep ourselves straight. My trousers are the only sufferers! I was the first up. None of the Russians succeeded!"

With one more quotation, Gordon's description of Etchmiazin, the celebrated monastery where the Armenian Catholicos resides, the extracts from these early letters may be concluded:—

"We passed through the oldest of the Armenian churches and monasteries, a place called Etchmiazin. It professes to be 1500 years old, and certainly has the appearance of great antiquity; it was existing during the time of the ruined city of Ani, and is built in a similar style. The relics there are greatly esteemed. People make pilgrimages to this monastery from all parts. There is, firstly, an arm of St Gregory, which is enclosed in a gold case covered with precious stones;

next the piece of the ark, which is necessarily of great antiquity; a piece of the cross and of the spear, and a finger-nail of St Peter complete the relics. All these are enveloped in gold cases, and richly ornamented with every sort of precious stones. The monastery owns ten villages and a great deal of land. The monks gave us a grand dinner, and their feeding certainly was not bad. The monks' council chamber was splendidly got up, all the ceiling being carved and gilded."

The concluding stages of the delimitation work were rapidly concluded, and before the end of September 1857 Colonel Simmons and his staff had returned to Constantinople. The illness of all the English officers except Gordon detained them some weeks in the Turkish capital, and he wrote home that his surveying duties had been superseded by those of sick nurse. But before the end of October he was back again in England, and met his father and the other members of his family after a still longer interval. While engaged on the frontier commission, his comrade in the trenches, Lieutenant William Christian Anderson, of his own Corps, had married one of his sisters, but, after a very short period of wedded happiness, he died suddenly. After his death a son was born who bore the same name, is now an officer in the Royal Artillery, and served on General Graham's staff at Souakim. Charles Gordon summed up his comrade's character in these words:—

"I am extremely distressed to hear of poor Willie Anderson's death, and every one who knew him will be so. He was a sterling good comrade and officer, greatly liked by both officers and men, and our Corps has sustained a great loss in him. I am so very sorry for poor dear ——. It is such a sudden blow to her, and I am sure they must have been so happy together during their short married life."

Gordon, therefore, found a certain amount of gloom in the family circle during the Christmas of 1857, and as his desire to join the staff of the army was not immediately attainable, the orders he suddenly received in April 1858 to again proceed to the Caucasus, in consequence of a slight frontier dispute with Russia, were not altogether disagreeable to him as a return to that active work which he loved. For some reason, which was probably the wish to save a little money by economy in travelling, with the view of carrying out his generous plans towards others, he took his passage to Constantinople in a slow steamer from the Thames, touching at Havre. He described his fellow-passengers as not very select, but amusing, and the voyage as "a yachting excursion, time being apparently no object." He only remained ten days at Constantinople, and reached Redout Kaleh in the Caucasus

on 3rd June, visiting Sebastopol on the way. He described it as still an utter ruin; "the grass had so overgrown the place where the camps stood that it was with difficulty I found my hut."

On 12th June Gordon joined his Russian colleague, Ogranovitch, at Ozurgeth; but the Turkish representative did not arrive for a month later, which interval Gordon employed in recording his impressions of Russian and Georgian society in the Caucasus:—

"I dined with the Governor-General, Prince Eristaw, who left the next day for Swaneti to overawe the subjects of the late Prince (he was shot at Kutais for stabbing Prince Gagarin, the predecessor of Prince Eristaw), who do not seem to have realised his death. The Prince takes two battalions of infantry and two guns nominally as an escort. There are some very pretty ladies at Kutais who dance their national dances capitally. They dance alone, and all the gentlemen beat time with their hands. I was surprised at seeing the ladies wear a sort of bracelet of black beads, to which they attached great value. I am sure they are nothing more than bog oak. . . . I have since discovered they are *cannel coal, not bog oak.* The ladies are very pretty, but have not very cleanly habits in general; they prefer their nails tipped, and do not hesitate at taking a bone and gnawing it. They live in extremely dirty houses, or rather huts. They are generally all princesses, and the men all princes, who, however, do not hesitate to accept small donations. I am always in fear and trembling lest they should give me anything, as it is necessary to give in return. I, unfortunately, happened to notice a certain glass letterweight with the Queen on it, and observed that it was like Her Majesty. I was given it on the spot, and with deep regret had to part with my soda-water machine the next day. I admire nothing now, you may be sure. The servants of Prince Dimitri Gouriel have made a good thing out of my visit, for each time they bring anything—butter, fruit, etc.—orders are given that an equivalent be given them in money. My hands get quite sticky with shaking hands with so many princes, but I have hitherto borne up like a martyr under my trials. On being invited to the house of a prince, you would figure yourself invited to a palace; but it is not the case here, and you would find it out to your cost if you did not take something to eat in your pockets."

The work of this Commission proved exceedingly fatiguing—Gordon breaking in characteristically with the statement: "I do not complain when there is no occasion"—and consisted chiefly in replacing the pyramids carefully removed by the population during the twelve months since they were erected. The successful result of this Commission was entirely due to Gordon's energy and untiring labour. His Russian and

Turkish colleagues were always quarrelling, and Gordon had to play the part of peacemaker—for which, he said, "I am naturally not well adapted"—an admission that may be commended to those who think that Gordon was a meek and colourless individual, with more affinity to a Methodist parson than the dauntless and resolute soldier he really was.

Early in October the whole delimitation was concluded, and without a hitch, much to Gordon's satisfaction. By 17th November he had reached Constantinople on his way home, but notwithstanding the special hardships of his work and his long absence from England, with one brief interval, he was still anxious for work and action. In the closing letter of his correspondence he said: "I do not feel at all inclined to settle in England and be employed in any sedentary way, and shall try and get employed here (Constantinople) if it is possible."

While these letters contain a very vivid account of the striking and remarkable events that occurred during the long military and diplomatic struggle with Russia, they are not less interesting or important for the many unconscious glimpses Gordon gives into his own character. In them may be found references to habits and things which show that the young officer was a sportsman, and by no means indifferent to creature comforts; and as the most careful search through all his later writings of every kind will bring no similar discovery, these acquire a special importance as showing that the original Gordon only differed from his comrades in being more earnest, more active, and more enthusiastic. I take at random such statements as "Our feeding is pretty good, but the drinking is not," "The Russians gave a spread [vulgar] on Saturday, noisily and badly got up. Their wine was simply execrable," and "How I wish I could get some partridge shooting! My bag up to the present (on the Danube) is 200—not bad! eh?" Then again, on a more delicate subject, there are numerous references to ladies, and to his appreciation of beauty. In a chaffing passage in one of his letters, he wrote that one of his sisters "wants me to bring home a Russian wife, I think; but I am sure you would not admire the Russian ladies I have seen." Again, the ladies of the Caucasus are pronounced "very pretty," and "the Gourelians are beautiful—in fact, I never saw so many handsome women as the peasants among them." At this time Gordon was certainly not a misogynist, but I am assured that the rumours as to his having met with an early disappointment in love are quite baseless of truth. From a very early period of his life, certainly before the Crimea, Gordon had made up his mind not to marry, and was in the habit of going even further, and wishing himself

dead. This sentiment led him to constantly refer to himself as "the dead man"; and some years later he wrote, "There is a Miss —— here, the nicest girl I ever met; but don't be afraid, the dead do not marry." His own secret opinion seems to have been that marriage spoilt both men and women, and it will be at least admitted that if he had married he could never have lived the disinterested, heroic life which remains a marvel for the world.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHINA WAR.

GORDON was back in England in good time for the Christmas festivities of 1858, and a few months later—1st April 1859—he was gazetted to the rank of Captain. About the same time he also received the appointment of Field-Work Instructor and Adjutant at Chatham, where his practical knowledge gained in the Sebastopol trenches was turned to good account in the theoretical training of future officers of his Corps. He was thus employed when the conflict in China, which had been in progress for some years, assumed a graver character in consequence of the Chinese refusal to ratify the Treaty of Tientsin and Admiral Hope's repulse in front of the Taku forts. Gordon at once volunteered for active service, and on 22nd July 1860 he sailed for the Far East. He did not reach Tientsin until the following 26th September, being, as he said in his first letter home, "rather late for the amusement, which won't vex mother." Not only had he missed the capture of the Taku forts, but also the one battle of the war, that fought at Chan-chia-wan on 9th September. He was, however, in time for the sack of the Summer Palace, which he describes in the following letter:—

"On the 11th October we were sent down in a great hurry to throw up works and batteries against the town, as the Chinese refused to give up the gate we required them to surrender before we would treat with them. They were also required to give up all the prisoners. You will be sorry to hear that the treatment they have suffered is very bad. Poor De Norman, who was with me in Asia, is one of the victims. It appears that they were tied so tight by the wrists that the flesh mortified, and they died in the greatest torture. Up to the time that elapsed before they arrived at the Summer Palace they were well treated, but then the ill-treatment began. The Emperor is supposed to have been there at the time.

"To go back to the work—the Chinese were given until twelve on the 13th to give up the gate. We made a lot of batteries, and everything was ready for the assault of the wall, which is battlemented and 40 feet high, but of inferior masonry. At 11.30 P.M. the gate was opened, and

we took possession; so our work was of no avail. The Chinese had then until the 23rd to think over our terms of peace, and to pay up £10,000 for each Englishman and £500 for each native soldier who died during their captivity. This they did, and the money was paid, and the Treaty signed yesterday. I could not witness it, as all officers commanding companies were obliged to remain in camp.

"Owing to the ill-treatment the prisoners experienced at the Summer Palace, the General ordered it to be destroyed, and stuck up proclamations to say why it was so ordered. We accordingly went out, and, after pillaging it, burned the whole place, destroying in a Vandal-like manner most valuable property which would not be replaced for four millions. We got upwards of £48 a-piece prize money before we went out here; and although I have not as much as many, I have done well. Imagine D—— giving sixteen shillings for a string of pearls, which he sold the next day for £500!

"The people are civil, but I think the grandees hate us, as they must after what we did to the Palace. You can scarcely imagine the beauty and magnificence of the places we burnt. It made one's heart sore to burn them; in fact, these palaces were so large, and we were so pressed for time, that we could not plunder them carefully. Quantities of gold ornaments were burnt, considered as brass. It was wretchedly demoralising work for an army. Everybody was wild for plunder.

"You would scarcely conceive the magnificence of this residence, or the tremendous devastation the French have committed. The throne-room was lined with ebony, carved in a marvellous way. There were huge mirrors of all shapes and kinds, clocks, watches, musical boxes with puppets on them, magnificent china of every description, heaps and heaps of silks of all colours, embroidery, and as much splendour and civilization as you would see at Windsor; carved ivory screens, coral screens, large amounts of treasure, etc. The French have smashed everything in the most wanton way. It was a scene of utter destruction which passes my description."

It may be of interest to state here that Gordon bought the throne referred to. Its supports are the Imperial Dragon's claws, and the cushions are of yellow Imperial silk. He presented it long afterwards to the headquarters of his Corps at Chatham, where it now stands.

On the exchange of the Treaty ratifications, which took place within the walls of the Imperial capital, the force under Sir Hope Grant was withdrawn to Tientsin, and after a brief space from China. But pending the payment of the instalments of the war indemnity, a garrison of 3000 men, under General Staveley, was left at Tientsin, and Captain Gordon was attached to this force. He had a very busy time of it at

first, for suitable quarters had to be provided for our troops, and Gordon was fully employed in the construction of barracks and stables. Among the other tasks that engaged his attention at the time was the management of a fund for the benefit of the Chinese poor, and he was much distressed by an unfortunate accident that attended its distribution.

"We had collected about nine hundred dollars for the poor, and had asked the mandarins to issue tickets to the most deserving. This they would not do, so a certain day was fixed upon which to distribute the funds. There were about 3000 beggars, and in the crush seven women and one boy were killed. The poor women on their little feet, on which they are never very safe, were thrown down and trampled upon."

During the eighteen months that Gordon resided at Tientsin he took every opportunity of seeing the country, and as often as he could he rode from that town along the banks of the Peiho river to the Taku forts at its mouth. The distance is about forty miles each way, and he computed that he accomplished it not fewer than twenty times. He also visited Peking in August 1861, and remained several days on a visit to Sir Frederick Bruce at the British Legation. At that date rumours were already current that the Emperor Hienfung, who never returned to Peking after our occupation, but made Yehol his capital and place of residence, was dead. These were true, but some time elapsed before it was officially announced that the Emperor had died on the 22nd of that month, the very day that Gordon reached Peking himself, and wrote the following letter: —

"The Emperor is reported to be dead, and his coffin has been sent for; but this is no proof, since it is the custom to send for a man's coffin when he is seriously ill, and it is kept for him even if he lives fifty years after."

Writing again some time after, he says on the grave event: "A great operation relating to the funeral of Hienfung is going on: a marble block, weighing sixty tons, is being removed from the quarries to the west of Peking to the cemetery in the east. It is drawn along upon a huge truck by six hundred ponies, and proceeds at the rate of four miles per day. When it arrives it is to be set up and carved into the shape of an elephant; several other large stones are also *en route*."

But the most interesting expedition Gordon undertook from Tientsin was that to the Great Wall, and here I must borrow Dr Birkbeck Hill's graphic description, which is based on a long letter from Gordon himself:—

"In December 1861, accompanied by Lieutenant Cardew of the 67th Regiment, he made a tour on horseback to the outer Wall of China at Kalgan. A Chinese lad of the age of fourteen who knew a little English acted as their servant and interpreter, while their baggage

was carried in two carts. In the course of their journey they passed through districts which had never before been visited by Europeans. Against the northern side of the city of Siuen-hoa (*not* Sinen-hoa, as printed in Dr Hill's book) they found that the sand had drifted with the wind till it had formed a sloping bank so high that it reached to the top of the walls, though they were nearly twenty feet high. Nature had followed in the steps of the generals of old, and had cast up a bank against the town. At Kalgan the Great Wall was with its parapet about 22 feet high and 16 feet broad. Both of its faces were built of bricks, each of which was three times the size of one of our bricks. The space between was filled in with rubble. 'It is wonderful,' writes Colonel Gordon, 'to see the long line of wall stretching over the hills as far as the eye can reach.' From Kalgan they travelled westwards to Taitong, where the wall was not so high. There they saw huge caravans of camels laden with 'brick tea' going towards Russia. Here they were forced to have the axle-trees of their carts widened, for they had come into a part of the country where the wheels were always set wider apart than in the province whence they came. Their carts therefore no longer filled the deep ruts which had been worn in the roads.

"The chief object of their journey had been to ascertain whether there was in the inner wall any pass besides the Tchatiaou, which on that side of the country led from the Russian territory to Peking. They pushed along southwards, in vain trying for a long time to find a way eastward over the mountains. It was not till they reached Taiyuen that they struck into the road that led to Peking or Tientsin.

"In this town, for the first time on their journey, they got into any kind of trouble. When their bill was brought them for their night's lodging they found that the charge was enormous. Seeing that a dispute would arise, they sent on their carts, and waited at the inn till they felt sure that they had got well on their way. They then, like the three Quakers with whom Charles Lamb travelled to Exeter, offered what they thought a reasonable sum. It was refused. They tried to mount their horses, but the people of the inn stopped them. Major Gordon took out his revolver, for show more than for use, for he allowed them to take it from him. He thereupon said, 'Let us go to the Mandarin!'

"To this they agreed, and at the same time they gave him back his revolver. They all walked towards the Mandarin's house—the two Englishmen alongside their horses. On the way Major Gordon said to his companion, 'Are you ready to mount?' 'Yes,' he answered. So they mounted quietly, and went on with the people. When they reached the Mandarin's they turned horses, and scampered after their carts as fast as they could. The people yelled and rushed after them, but it was too late.

"Some way beyond Taiyuen they came upon the pass over the mountains which led down into the country drained by the Peiho. The descent was a terrible one. All along the cold had been intense—so much so that raw eggs were frozen hard as if they had been boiled. To add to their troubles, when they were on in front their carts were attacked by robbers; but the Chinese lad—an ugly imp—kept them off with his gun. When they drew near Paoting-fu they sent on with the lad the two carts and their tired horses, which had now carried them for three weeks without the break of a single day, and they hired a fresh cart in which they thought to ride to Tientsin. But with the boy gone they had no interpreter, and in their impatience, 'their new driver'—to quote our traveller's own words—'got rather crossly dealt with.' They stopped near Paoting-fu for the night. Early next morning as they were washing they heard the gates of the inn open and the rumble of cart-wheels. They guessed what was happening. 'Half stripped as I was, I rushed out and saw our cart bolting away. I ran for a mile after it, but had to come back and hire another with which we got to Tientsin—more than fourteen days over our leave.'"

From this pleasant but uneventful occupation Gordon was summoned to a scene where important events were in progress, and upon which he was destined to play what was perhaps, after all, the most brilliant part in the long course of his remarkable career. His brother puts the change into a single sentence:—

"On the 28th of April 1862 Captain Gordon left the Peiho and arrived at Shanghai on 3rd of May, and at once dropped into the command of a district with the charge of the engineer part of an expedition about to start, with the intention of driving the rebels out of a circuit of thirty miles from Shanghai."

By the end of March 1862 the Chinese Government had sufficiently carried out its obligations to admit of the withdrawal of the force at Tientsin, and General Staveley transferred the troops and his quarters from that place to Shanghai, where the Taeping rebels were causing the European settlement grave anxiety, and what seemed imminent peril. The Taepings, of whose rebellion some account will be given in the next chapter, were impelled to menace Shanghai by their own necessities. They wanted arms, ammunition, and money, and the only means of obtaining them was by the capture of the great emporium of foreign trade. But such an adventure not merely implied a want of prudence and knowledge, it could only be attempted by a breach of their own promises. When Admiral Hope had sailed up the Yangtsekiang and visited Nanking, he demanded and received from Tien Wang, the Taeping king or leader, a promise that the

Taeping forces should not advance within a radius of thirty miles of Shanghai. That promise in its larger extent had soon been broken, and an attack on Shanghai itself, although unsuccessful, crowned the offences of the rebels, and entailed the chastisement a more prudent course would have averted. Without entering into the details here that will be supplied later on, it will suffice to say that in January 1862 the Taepings advanced against Shanghai, burning all the villages *en route*, and laid irregular siege to it during more than six weeks. Although they suffered several reverses, the European garrison was not in sufficient strength to drive them away, and a general anxiety prevailed among the European community when the arrival of General Staveley altered the posture of affairs.

Before Gordon arrived two affairs of some importance had taken place. At Wongkadza, a village twelve miles west of Shanghai, General Staveley obtained a considerable success, which was, however, turned into a disaster by the disobedience of his orders. The Taepings had retired to some stronger stockades, and General Staveley had ordered the postponement of the attack until the next day, when the trained Chinese troops, carried away by their leaders' impetuosity, renewed the assault. The result was a rude repulse, with the loss of nearly 100 men killed and wounded. The next day the stockades were evacuated, and within another week the fortified villages of Tsipu and Kahding were also taken. It was at this point that Gordon arrived from Tientsin, and reached the scene of action just as the arrangements for attacking the important village of Tsingpu were being completed.

That the Taepings were not contemptible adversaries, at least those under their redoubtable leader Chung Wang, was shown by their attempting to destroy Shanghai by fire, even while these operations were in progress. The plot nearly succeeded, but its promoters were severely punished by the summary execution of 200 of their number. The force assembled for the attack on Tsingpu assumed almost the dimensions of an army. General Staveley commanded 1,429 British troops with twenty guns and mortars, in addition to a naval brigade of 380 men and five guns. There was also a French contingent of 800 men and ten guns, under Admiral Protet. At Tsingpu Gordon specially distinguished himself by the manner in which he reconnoitred the place, and then placed and led the ladder parties after two breaches had been pronounced practical. The Taepings fought well, but the place was carried, and the Chinese auxiliaries killed every one they found with arms in their hands. Commenting on Gordon's part in this affair, General Staveley wrote in his official despatch :—

"Captain Gordon was of the greatest use to me when the task of clearing the rebels from out of the country within a radius of thirty miles from Shanghai had to be undertaken. He reconnoitred the enemy's defences, and arranged for the ladder parties to cross the moats, and for the escalading of the works; for we had to attack and carry by storm several towns fortified with high walls and deep wet ditches. He was, however, at the same time a source of much anxiety to me from the daring manner he approached the enemy's works to acquire information. Previous to our attack upon Tsingpu, and when with me in a boat reconnoitring the place, he begged to be allowed to land in order better to see the nature of the defences; presently, to my dismay, I saw him gradually going nearer and nearer, by rushes from cover to cover, until he got behind a small outlying pagoda within 100 yards of the wall, and here he was quietly making a sketch and taking notes. I, in the meantime, was shouting myself hoarse in trying to get him back, for not only were the rebels firing at him from the walls, but I saw a party stealing round to cut him off."

A letter from Gordon gives an interesting account of the two subsequent affairs at Nanjao, where Admiral Protet was killed, and at Cholin, where the Taepings suffered a severe but, as it proved, not a decisive defeat.

"On going through the village a Chang-mow (rebel leader) came out of a house rubbing his eyes, evidently having been taking a siesta; he was horrified, and bolted, but was soon caught, and the sailors had much difficulty in saving his life from the villagers, who flew upon and would have killed him. Poor man! he had such a nice costume when taken, but in five minutes afterwards you would scarcely have known him; all his finery, and even more, had been taken from him. The small force encamped and entrenched themselves 900 yards from Cholin, much to the surprise and anger of the garrison. They came down in force on the next morning with no end of banners. Upon the principle that inquiring minds should not be balked, they were allowed to come pretty close, but then the poor things received a check, and the beautiful silk banners were furled up and carried back to the town.

"The next day General Staveley sent us word to come back, since he would attack Nanjao first, but as there were nearly 1000 villagers depending upon our protection and crowding round our camp, I was sent back with an armed party, and Captain Willes remained in front of the town. I went back by a different road and came on the General four miles from Nanjao. We marched on, and halted near the town, which was reconnoitred during the night, and the guns placed in

position by 5 P.M. On the 17th we opened fire at seven, and attacked the place. Here Admiral Protet was killed; he was among 500 men, and was the only one struck. The town was a wretched affair, and a good many Chang-mows escaped. These Chang-mows are very funny people; they always run when attacked. They are ruthlessly cruel, and have a system of carrying off small boys under the hope of training them up as rebels. We always found swarms of these boys who had been taken from their parents (whom the rebels had killed) in the provinces.

"I saved one small creature who had fallen into the ditch in trying to escape, for which he rewarded me by destroying my coat with his muddy paws in clinging to me. I started soon after the attack for Cholin, and got there on the 18th. The rebels had made a *sortie* since my departure, and had got into a pretty mess. Willes let them come up and then advanced on them; over sixty were killed, and several taken prisoners. The General then came. We got our guns in position during the night, opened fire next morning, and assaulted at seven. The place was miserable and poor. The Armstrong guns, which enfiladed one face, did great execution."

The fruits of these successes were lost by the signal overthrow and practical annihilation of a large Chinese army at Taitsan. One of General Staveley's detachments was cut off, and with his communications threatened he found himself compelled to abandon Kahding, and to retire towards Shanghai. Tsingpu had also to be abandoned, and the garrison suffered some loss in effecting its retreat. Of the first results of General Staveley's campaign there thus remained very little, and it was only in the autumn that these places were retaken, and the campaign against the Taepings in the Shanghai districts continued with varying fortune throughout the remainder of the year 1862 and the early months of 1863.

While these military events were in progress Major Gordon, who was raised to the rank of Major in the army in December 1862 for his services in China, had been trusted with the congenial task, and one for which he was pre-eminently well suited, of surveying and mapping the whole of the region for thirty miles. This work, necessary in itself for many reasons, proved of incalculable value to him in the operations which he eventually undertook and carried out to a successful issue against the rebels. His own letters show how thoroughly he fulfilled his instructions, and how his surveys ended in his complete mastery of the topography of the region between the Grand Canal, the sea, and the Yangtsekiang:—

"I have been now in every town and village in the thirty miles'

radius. The country is the same everywhere—a dead flat, with innumerable creeks and bad pathways. The people have now settled down quiet again, and I do not anticipate the rebels will ever come back. They are rapidly on the decline, and two years ought to bring about the utter suppression of the revolt. I do not write about what we saw, as it amounts to nothing. There is nothing of any interest in China; if you have seen one village you have seen all the country. I have really an immensity to do. It will be a good thing if the Government support the propositions which are made to the Chinese.

"The weather here is delightful—a fine cold, clear air which is quite invigorating after the summer heats. There is very good pheasant-shooting in the half-populated districts, and some quail at uncertain times. It is extraordinary to see the quantities of fishing cormorants there are in the creeks. These cormorants are in flocks of forty and fifty, and the owner in a small canoe travels about with them. They fish three or four times a day, and are encouraged by the shouts of their owners to dive. I have scarcely ever seen them come up without a fish in their beaks, which they swallow, but not for any distance, for there is a ring to prevent it going down altogether. They get such dreadful attacks of mumps, their throats being distended by the fish, which are alive, when the birds seem as if they were pouter pigeons. They are hoisted into the boats and then are very sea-sick. Would you consider the fish a dainty?"

And again he writes about the Taepings, who were not in his eyes "a people nobly struggling to be free," but a horde of ruthless marauders.

"We had a visit from the marauding Taepings the other day. They came close down in small parties to the settlement and burnt several houses, driving in thousands of inhabitants. We went against them and drove them away, but did not kill many. They beat us into fits in getting over the country, which is intersected in every way with ditches, swamps, etc. You can scarcely conceive the crowds of peasants who come into Shanghai when the rebels are in the neighbourhood—upwards of 15,000, I should think, and of every size and age—many strapping fellows who could easily defend themselves come running in with old women and children.

"The people on the confines are suffering very greatly, and are in fact dying of starvation. It is most sad this state of affairs, and our Government really ought to put the rebellion down. Words could not depict the horrors these people suffer from the rebels, or describe the utter desert they have made of this rich province. It is all very well to talk of non-intervention, and I am not particularly sensitive, nor are our

soldiers generally so, but certainly we are all impressed with the utter misery and wretchedness of these poor people. . . . In the midst of those terrible times the British and foreign merchants behaved nobly and gave great relief, while the Chinese merchants did not lag behind in acts of charity. The hardest heart would have been touched at the utter misery of these poor harmless people, for whatever may be said of their rulers, no one can deny but that the Chinese peasantry are the most obedient, quiet, and industrious people in the world."

The propositions referred to in the former of these two letters were that the services of Major Gordon should be lent to the Chinese Government for the suppression of the Taeping rebellion, that he should assume the command of an Anglo-Chinese legion of which the nucleus already existed, and that he might enlist the services of a certain number of our own officers. Considerable delay took place in the execution of this project, as it was necessary to send to Europe for the necessary authority; and another explanation was given subsequently to the effect that Gordon insisted on finishing his survey first. But Sir Charles Staveley, who nominated Major Gordon for the work, has effectually disposed of this latter statement by declaring that the former was the true and only cause. At length these propositions were sanctioned, and on 26th March 1863 Major Gordon proceeded to Sungkiang, a town west of Shanghai and south of Tsingpu, to take over the command of the Chinese force, which had already been named the Ever Victorious Army, and which in his hands justified its name.

Before closing this chapter it will be well to give some account of the origin of this force, and of the more important events that preceded Gordon's appointment to the command. As far back as April 1860 the Viceroy of the Two Kiang provinces had begged the English and French representatives to lend him military assistance in dealing with the rebels. The request was not complied with, but when some of the richest native merchants of Shanghai, with one Takee at their head, formed themselves into a patriotic association, and bound themselves to provide the funds required to raise a European-led force, no impediments were placed in their way. In July 1860 the services of two American adventurers who had had some military experience in Central America and elsewhere were enlisted and taken into the pay of this merchants' guild. Their names were Ward and Burgevine, and they were both adventurers of an unscrupulous and unattractive type. In addition to excellent pay, they were promised handsome money rewards for the capture of specified places, and what spoil there was to take should be theirs. Such a prospect was very inviting to the bold spirits of a great port like Shanghai, with its trading ships from every quarter of

the world, and they succeeded in recruiting about 100 Europeans and 200 Manilla men or Spanish half-breeds.

In order to test the quality of this force it was decided to attack Sungkiang; and in July, only a week or so after it was organised, Ward led his somewhat motley band against that place. The result was unfavourable, as his attack was repulsed with some loss. Nothing daunted, Ward collected some more Manilla men and renewed the attack. He succeeded in capturing one of the gates, and in holding it until an Imperial army of 10,000 men arrived, when the town was carried by storm. Having thus proved its mettle, Ward's force became very popular, and it was increased by many fresh recruits, chiefly Greeks and Italians. It also was strengthened by the addition of some artillery, two six-pounder and later two eighteen-pounder guns.

The Chinese merchants then offered Ward and his quarter-master Burgevine a large reward for the capture of Tsingpu; and their legion, accompanied by a Chinese force of 10,000 men, who were, however, only to look on while it did the fighting, accordingly marched on that place. The attack made during the night of 2nd August resulted in a most disastrous repulse, most of the Europeans being either killed or wounded, Ward himself receiving a severe wound in the jaw. He renewed the attack with fresh men and two eighteen-pounders three weeks later; but after bombarding the place for seven days, he was attacked by the Taeping hero Chung Wang, and routed, with the loss of his guns and military stores. It was on this occasion that Chung Wang, following up his success, and doubly anxious to capture Shanghai because this new and unexpected force was organised there, attacked that town, and was only repulsed by the English and French troops who lined its walls.

This reverse at Tsingpu destroyed the reputation of Ward's force, and for several months he remained discredited and unemployed. In March 1861 he reappeared at Sungkiang, at the head of sixty or seventy Europeans whom he had recruited for the Imperial cause; but at that moment the policy of the foreign Consuls had undergone a change in favour of the Taepings, and Ward was arrested as a disturber of the peace. Perhaps a more serious offence was that the high pay he offered and prospect of loot had induced nearly thirty British sailors to desert their ships. He was released on his claiming that he was a Chinese subject, and also on his sending orders to his colleague Burgevine to return the troops they had enlisted. Burgevine thought he saw in this a chance of personal distinction, and before disbanding the men he made with them another attack on Tsingpu. This attack, like its two predecessors, was repulsed with heavy loss, and the original Ward force

was thus finally discredited. It should be borne in mind, to distinguish it from what followed, that it was a mercenary force of European and Spanish half-breeds, without a single Chinese in it.

In September 1861 these two men altered their proceedings, and gave a new turn to the whole question. As it was impossible for them to recruit foreigners, they induced Takee and his associates to provide the funds for a native Chinese force, which they undertook to train and organise. In this task they made considerable progress, and with a view to making it popular with the Chinese, and also to give the men confidence, this new force was named, probably by Takee, the Chun Chen Chün or Ever Victorious Army. This proud title was given long before the claim to it was justified, but its subsequent appropriateness has buried in oblivion the slender claim it possessed to it on its inception.

By the end of January 1862 Ward had succeeded in training two regiments of 1000 men each, and with these he captured Quanfuling and 200 boats in the rear of the Taeping force, which attacked Shanghai for a third time in that month. When the English and French forces assumed the offensive before the arrival of Sir Charles Staveley, part of Ward's Corps accompanied them in the attack on Kachiaou. It led the attack, and behaved extremely well, thus giving rise to very favourable anticipations as to what a properly-trained Chinese army might do.

In a second action at Tseedong the force maintained the reputation it had gained. The Chinese fought with great bravery, and the difficulty, in fact, was in keeping them back. The English general reviewed them after this encounter, and declared himself much impressed with their appearance. Representations were made at Peking, and on 16th March 1862 an Imperial decree gave the first public recognition of the Ever Victorious Army.

Although reverses followed, the Corps maintained the reputation it had gained for steadiness and discipline. Under General Staveley at Wongkadza it acted well and lost heavily, and in all the subsequent movements of that officer it took a prominent part. When Tsingpu was captured, as already described, one of Ward's regiments was left in it as a garrison, but on the evacuation of that place in consequence of the return of Chung Wang with fresh and more numerous forces, it narrowly escaped annihilation. It was then that the Taeping general named them in scornful irony, "Cha-Yang-Kweitser," or "Sham Foreign Devils," the point of the sarcasm being that these troops wore an European costume.

During the summer of 1862, when the heat rendered active opera-

tions impossible, everything was done to increase both the numbers and the efficiency of the Ever Victorious Army. By the month of July its strength had been raised to 5000 men, the commissioned officers being all Europeans except one Chinese, named Wongepoo, who had been given a commission for special gallantry by Admiral Hope. Ward was in chief command, and Colonel Forrester and Burgevine were his first and second lieutenants. When the weather became a little cooler in August, it was determined to utilise this force for the recapture of Tsingpu, which was taken at the second assault on the 9th of that month, although not without heavy loss in officers and men. Six weeks later the important Taeping position at Tseki, across the Hangchow Bay and not far distant from Ningpo, was attacked by Ward and a party of English blue-jackets. The operation was perfectly successful, but Ward was shot in the stomach and died the next day. His loss was a very considerable one, for, as Gordon said, "he managed both the force and the mandarins very ably." Colonel Forrester should have succeeded to the command, but he declined the post, which then devolved upon Burgevine.

After a brief space the services of Captain Holland of the Royal Marine Light Infantry were lent to Burgevine in the capacity of Chief of the staff, and as this was done at the suggestion of the Futai Li—since famous to Europeans as Li Hung Chang—it did not conduce to greater harmony between him and Burgevine, for their antagonism had already become marked. An occasion soon offered to fan this feeling to a flame. A Chinese army under Li and General Ching advanced to attack a Taeping position near Tsingpu, at the same time that Burgevine at the head of his corps assailed it from the other side. The brunt of the fighting fell on the latter, but when Li issued his bulletin he claimed all the credit of the victory, and totally ignored Burgevine and his men. Burgevine did not accept this rebuff meekly, and his peremptory manner offended the Chinese. The breach was widened by the distrust many of the Chinese merchants as well as officials felt as to his loyalty, and soon it was seen that the funds so freely supplied to Ward would not be forthcoming in his case.

Burgevine's character has been described in the following sentence by Gordon himself:—

"He was a man of large promises and few works. His popularity was great among a certain class. He was extravagant in his generosity, and as long as he had anything would divide it with his so-called friends, but never was a man of any administrative or military talent, and latterly, through the irritation caused by his unhealed wound and other causes, he was subject to violent paroxysms of anger,

which rendered precarious the safety of any man who tendered to him advice that might be distasteful. He was extremely sensitive of his dignity."

The situation between the Chinese authorities and Burgevine soon became so strained that the former presented a formal complaint to General Staveley, and begged him to remove Burgevine. This, as the English commander pointed out, was for obvious reasons beyond his power, but he made representations to his Government, and suggested that an English officer should be lent to the Chinese, and he nominated Gordon as the best qualified for the work. Pending the arrival of the required authority, the Chinese, assisted by Burgevine's own impetuosity, brought their relations with him to a climax. The merchant Takee withheld the pay of the force; Burgevine was first ordered to proceed with his troops to Nanking, and then, on consenting, the order was withdrawn; some weeks later a fresh order to the same effect was issued, and Burgevine demanded the payment of all arrears before he would move, and thus Li's object of exposing Burgevine as a disobedient officer to the Government that employed him was attained.

The Ever Victorious Army, excited by the absence of its pay, and worked upon by the exhortations of its chief, was on the point of mutiny, and Burgevine hastened to Shanghai to obtain by force rather than persuasion the arrears. On 4th January 1863 he saw Takee, a violent scene ensued, and Burgevine used violence. Not only did he strike Takee, but he carried off the treasure necessary to pay his men. Such conduct could not be upheld or excused. Li Hung Chang made the strongest complaint. Burgevine was dismissed the Chinese service, and General Staveley forwarded the notice to him with a quiet intimation that it would be well to give up his command without making a disturbance. Burgevine complied with this advice, handed over the command to Captain Holland, and came back to Shanghai on 6th of January. He published a defence of his conduct, and expressed his regret for having struck Takee.

Captain Holland was thus the third commander of the Ever Victorious Army, and a set of regulations was drawn up between Li Hung Chang and General Staveley as to the conduct and control of the force. It was understood that Captain Holland's appointment was only temporary until the decision of the Government as to Gordon's nomination arrived, but this arrangement allowed of the corps again taking the field, for although it cost the Chinese £30,000 a month, it had done nothing during the last three months of the year 1862. Early in February 1863, therefore, Captain Holland, at the head of 2,300 men, including a strong force of artillery—600 men and

twenty-two guns and mortars — was directed to attack Taitsan, an important place about fifty miles north-east of Shanghai. An Imperialist army of nearly 10,000 men acted in conjunction with it. The affair was badly managed and proved most disastrous.

After a short bombardment a breach was declared to be practicable, and the ladder and storming parties were ordered to the assault. Unfortunately, the reconnoitring of the Taeping position had been very carelessly done, and the attacking parties were checked by a wet ditch, twenty feet wide and six feet deep, of which nothing had been seen. Situated only forty yards from the wall of the town, and without any means of crossing it, although some few did by throwing across a ladder, the storming party stood exposed to a terrific fire. Captain Holland ordered a retreat, but it was not managed any better than the attack. The light guns were removed too quickly, and the heavy ones were stuck so fast in the mud that they could not be removed at all. The Taepings attacked in their turn, and the greatest confusion prevailed, during which the survivors of the larger half of the Ever Victorious Army escaped in small detachments back to Sungkiang. Twenty European officers were killed or wounded, besides 300 Chinese privates. Captain Holland exposed himself freely, but this, his only action in independent command, resulted in complete and unqualified failure. Gordon himself summed up the causes of this serious and discouraging reverse :—

"The causes of the failure were the too cheap rate at which the rebels were held. The force had hitherto fought with the allies with them (except at Tsingpu). They now had to bear the brunt of the fighting themselves, the mistake of not having provided bridges in spite of the mandarin's information, and the too close proximity of the heavy guns to the walls, and the want of cover they had, and finally the withdrawal of the lighter guns before the heavy guns, whose removal they should have covered. There is little doubt that the rebels had been warned by persons in Shanghai of the intended attack, and that several foreigners, who had been dismissed by Captain Holland, were with the rebels defending the breach. As may be imagined, Burgevine's removal had caused considerable feeling among his acquaintances, who were not sorry to see the first expedition of the force under an English officer fail, being in hopes that the command would again revert to Burgevine."

This reverse occurred on 13th February, and no further steps of any consequence were taken until the appointment of Major Gordon, which at last was sanctioned in the latter portion of March, about a week before ill-health compelled General Staveley to resign his command in

China. That officer was connected with the Gordon family, his sister, a most amiable and sympathetic lady, being Lady Gordon, widow of the late Sir Henry Gordon. As far back as May 1861—that is, prior to most of the events described in this chapter—Gordon's sensitiveness about his family connection with the commanding officer in China had impelled him to write this letter:—

"I was much put out in Henry's writing, and I think hinting he could do something for me, and I went to Staveley and told him so. It is the bother of one's life to be trying after the honours of the profession, and it has grown in late years into a regular trade—everyone uses private interest."

When Gordon gave this early manifestation of his independent spirit he was little more than twenty-eight years of age, but it should certainly be noted as showing that in one respect he was very little changed in his later years from what he was in his youth.

After these reverses in February nothing more was attempted until Major Gordon arrived at Sungkiang on 25th March 1863 to take over the command of the force. It is to be hoped that the last few pages have made clear what that force was like. In the first place, it had been one composed entirely of Europeans, a band somewhat resembling those that have set up and cast down the mushroom republics that separate the conquests of Pizarro from those of Cortes. That force achieved nothing and had an ignominious end. It was succeeded by the larger force of drilled Chinese, to which was given the name of the Ever Victorious Army. Although these Chinese showed far more courage than might have been expected of them, none of their leaders—Ward, Burgevine, or Holland—seemed able to turn their good qualities to any profitable purpose. They were as often defeated as successful, and at the very moment of Gordon's assuming the command the defeat of Captain Holland at Taitsan, and a subsidiary reverse of Major Tapp at Fushan, had reduced their *morale* to the lowest point, and even justified a belief that for military purposes this force was nearly, if not quite, worthless.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TAEPING REBELLION.

In order to bring before the reader the magnitude of Gordon's achievements in China it is necessary to describe briefly the course of the Taeping rebellion, and to show the kind of opponents over whom he was destined to obtain so glorious and decisive a victory. But as this would be to tell a thrice-told tale, I content myself with giving in an abridged form the account I prepared from the papers of General Gordon and other trustworthy sources, which appears in the last volume of my "History of China."

As far back as the year 1830 there had been symptoms of disturbed popular feeling in Kwangsi, the most southern province of China adjacent to Tonquin. The difficulty of operating in a region which possessed few roads, and which was only rendered at all accessible by the West River or Sikiang, had led the Chinese authorities, much engaged as they were about the foreign question, to postpone those vigorous measures, which, if taken at the outset, might have speedily restored peace and stamped out the first promptings of revolt. The authorities were more concerned at the proceedings of the formidable secret Association, known as the "Triads," than at the occurrences in Kwangsi, probably because the Triads made no secret that their object was the expulsion of the Manchus and the restoration of the old Ming dynasty. The true origin of the Triads is not to be assigned, but there seems reasonable ground for the suspicion that they were connected with the discontented monks of a Buddhist monastery which had been suppressed by the Government. Between them they seem to have formed the inception of what became the famous Taeping rebellion.

The summer of 1850 witnessed a great accession of energy on the part of the rebels in Kwangsi, which may perhaps have been due to the death of the Emperor Taoukwang. The important town of Wuchow on the Sikiang, close to the western border of Kwantung, was besieged by a force reported to number 50,000 men. The governor was afraid to report the occurrence, knowing that it would

carry his own condemnation and probable disgrace; and it was left for a minor official to reveal the extent to which the insurgents had carried their depredations. Two leaders named Chang assumed the style of royalty; other bands appeared in the province of Hoonan as well as in the southern parts of Kwantung, but they all collected by degrees on the Sikiang, where they placed an embargo on merchandise, and gradually crushed out such trade as there had been by that river. Their proceedings were not restricted to the fair operations of war. They plundered and massacred wherever they went. They claimed to act in the name of the Chinese people; yet they slew all they could lay hands upon, without discrimination of age or sex.

The confidence of the insurgents was raised by frequent success, and by the manifest inability of the Canton Viceroy to take any effectual military measures against them. Two hundred imperial troops were decoyed into a defile, and slaughtered by an overwhelming force in ambush. This reverse naturally caused considerable alarm in Canton itself, and defensive measures were taken. Governor Yeh was sent against them with 2000 men, and he succeeded in compelling, or as some say in inducing, them to retreat. Any satisfaction this success may have occasioned was soon dispelled, for at Lienchow, near the small port of Pakhoi, the rebels not merely gained a victory, but were joined by the troops sent to attack them. But these successes at several different points were of far less significance than the nomination of a single chief with the royal title of Tien Wang, or the Heavenly King.

The man on whom their choice fell was named Hung-tsiuen. He was the son of a small farmer, who lived in a village near the North River, about thirty miles from Canton. If he was not a Hakka himself, he lived in a district which was considered to belong exclusively to that strange race, which closely resembles our gipsies. He belonged to a degraded race, therefore, and it was held that he was not entitled to that free entry into the body of the civil service, which is the natural privilege of every true-born Chinese subject. His friends declared that he came out high at each of the periodical examinations, but their statements may have been false in this as in much else. The fact is clear that he failed to obtain his degrees, and that he was denied admission into the public service. Hung was therefore a disappointed candidate, the more deeply disappointed, perhaps, that his sense of injured merit and the ill-judging flattery of his admirers made his rejection appear unjust.

Hung was, at all events, a shrewd observer of the weakness of the Government, and of the popular discontent. He perceived the

opportunity of making the Manchu dynasty the scapegoat of national weakness and apathy. He could not be the servant of the Government. Class contempt, the prejudices of his examiners, or it may even have been his own haughty presumption and self-sufficiency, effectually debarred him from the enjoyment of the wealth and privileges that fall to the lot of those in executive power in all countries, but in Asiatic above every other. To his revengeful but astute mind it was clear that if he could not be an official he might be the enemy of the Government and its possible subverter.

The details of his early career have been mainly recorded by those who sympathised with the supposed objects of his operations; and while they have been very anxious to discover his virtues, they were always blind to his failings. The steps of his imposture have therefore been described with an amount of implicit belief which reflected little credit on the judgment of those who were anxious to give their sanction to the miracles which preceded the appearance of this adventurer in the field. Absurd stories as to his dreams, allegorical coincidences showing how he was summoned by a just and all-powerful God to the supreme seat of power, were repeated with a degree of faith so emphatic in its mode of expression as to make the challenge of its sincerity appear extremely harsh. Hung, the defeated official candidate, the long-deaf listener to the entreaties of Christian missionaries, was thus in a brief time metamorphosed into Heaven's elect for the Dragon Throne, into the iconoclastic propagator of the worship of a single God, and the destroyer of the mass of idolatry stored in the hearts and venerated in the temples of the Chinese people for countless ages. Whether Hung was merely an intriguer or a fanatic, he could not help feeling some gratitude to those who so conveniently echoed his pretensions to the Throne at the same time that they pleaded extenuating circumstances for acts of cruelty and brigandage often unsurpassed in their infamy.

If he found the foreigners thus willing to accept him at his own estimate, it would have been very strange if he had not experienced still greater success in imposing upon the credulity of his own countrymen. To declare that he had dreamt dreams which showed that he was selected by a heavenly mandate for Royal honours was sufficient to gain a small body of adherents, provided only that he was prepared to accept the certain punishment of detection and failure. If Hung's audacity was shown by nothing else, it was demonstrated by the lengths to which he carried the supernatural agency that urged him to quit the ignominious life of a Kwantung peasant for the career of a pretender to Imperial honours. The course of training to which he subjected himself, the ascetic deprivations, the loud prayers and invocations, the supernatural

counsels and meetings, was that adopted by every other religious devotee or fanatic as the proper novitiate for those honours based on the superstitious reverence of mankind, which are sometimes no inadequate substitute for temporal power and influence, even when they fail to pave the way to their attainment.

Yet when Hung proceeded to Kwangsi there was no room left to hope that the seditious movement would dissolve of its own accord, for the extent and character of his pretensions at once invested the rising with all the importance of open and unveiled rebellion. After the proclamation of Hung as Tien Wang, the success of the Kwangsi rebels increased. The whole of the country south of the Sikiang, with the strong military station of Nanning, fell into their hands, and they prepared in the early part of the year 1851 to attack the provincial capital Kweiling, which commanded one of the principal high roads into the interior of China. So urgent did the peril at this place appear that three Imperial Commissioners were sent there direct by land from Peking, and the significance of their appointment was increased by the fact that they were all Manchus. They were instructed to raise troops *en route*, and to reach Kweiling as soon as possible. Their movements were so dilatory that that place would have fallen if it had not been for the courage and military capacity shown by Wurantai, leader of the Canton Bannermen. This soldier fully realised the perils of the situation. In a memorial to the Throne he spoke plainly :—

"The outer barbarians (Europeans) say that of literature China has more than enough, of the art of war not sufficient. The whole country swarms with the rebels. Our funds are nearly at an end, and our troops few ; our officers disagree, and the power is not concentrated. The commander of the forces wants to extinguish a burning wagon-load of fagots with a cupful of water. I fear we shall hereafter have some serious affair—that the great body will rise against us, and our own people leave us."

The growth of the rebellion proved steady if slow. Although 30,000 troops were stated to be concentrated opposite the Taeping positions, fear or inexperience prevented action, and the numbers and courage of the Imperialists melted away. Had the Chinese authorities only pressed on, they must, by sheer weight, have swept the rebels into Tonquin, and there would thus have been an end of Tien Wang and his aspirations. They lacked the nerve, and their vacillation gave confidence and reputation to an enemy that need never have been allowed to become formidable.

While the Imperial authorities had been either discouraged or at the least lethargic, the pretender Tien Wang had been busily engaged in

establishing his authority on a sound basis, and in assigning their respective ranks to his principal followers who saw in the conferring of titles and posts, at the moment of little meaning or value, the recognition of their past zeal and the promise of reward for future service. The men who rallied round Tien Wang were schoolmasters and labourers. To these some brigands of the mountain frontier supplied rude military knowledge, while the leaders of the Triads brought as their share towards the realisation of what they represented as a great cause skill in intrigue, and some knowledge of organisation. Neither enthusiasm nor the energy of desperation was wanting; but for those qualities which claim respect, if they cannot command success, we must look in vain. Yet the peasants of Kwangsi and the artisans of Kwantung assumed the title of "Wang" or prince, and divided in anticipation the prizes that should follow the establishment of some dynasty of their own making.

The war dragged on in the Sikiang valley during two years, but the tide of success had certainly set in the main against the Imperialists, as was shown by the scene of operations being transferred to the northern side of that river. The campaign might have continued indefinitely until one side or the other was exhausted had not the state of the province warned Tien Wang that he could not hope to feed much longer the numerous followers who had attached themselves to his cause. He saw that there would very soon remain for him no choice except to retire into Tonquin, and to settle down into the ignominious life of a border brigand. To Tien Wang the thought was intolerable, and in sheer desperation he came to the resolve to march northwards into the interior of China. It was not the inspiration of genius but the pressure of dire need that urged the Taeping leader to issue his orders for the invasion of Hoonan. He issued a proclamation on the eve of beginning this march, announcing that he had received "the divine commission to exterminate the Manchus and to possess the Empire as its true sovereign."

It was at this stage in the rebellion that the name "Taepings" came into general use, and various accounts are given as to its origin. Some say it was taken from the small town of that name in the south-west of Kwangsi, where the insurrection began; others that the characters mean "Universal Peace," and that it was the style assumed by the new dynasty. In seeming contradiction with this is the fact that some of the Taepings themselves declared that they never heard the name, and did not know what it meant. At this particular juncture the rebels were in the heart of Kwangsi, at the district capital of Woosuen. In May 1851 they moved to Siang, a little north of that place. They

ravaged the country, making no long stay anywhere. In August they were at Yungan, where 16,000 men were ranged under the banner of the Heavenly King, and for a moment Tien Wang may have thought of making a dash on Canton. Respect for Wurantai's military capacity induced him to forego the adventure, and at Yungan, where he remained until April 1852, the Taeping leader made his final arrangements for his march northwards.

At Yungan a circumstance occurred which first promised to strengthen the Taepings, and then to lead to their disruption. Tien Wang was joined there by five influential chiefs and many members of the Triad Society. For a time it seemed as if these allies would necessarily bring with them a great accession of popular strength; but whether they disapproved of Tien Wang's plans, or were offended by the arrogant bearing of the Wangs, who, but the other day little better than the dregs of the people, had suddenly assumed the yellow dress and insignia of Chinese royalty, the Triad leaders took a secret and hurried departure from his camp, and hastened to make their peace with the Imperialists. The principal of these members of the most formidable secret society in China—Chang Kwoliang by name—was given a military command of some importance, and afterwards distinguished himself among the Imperial commanders. In April 1852 the Taeping army left its quarters at Yungan and marched direct on Kweiling, the principal city of the province, where the Imperial commissioners sent from Peking had long remained inactive. Tien Wang attacked them at the end of April or the beginning of May, but he was repulsed with some loss. Afraid of breaking his force against the walls of so strong a place, he abandoned the attack and marched into Hoonan. Had the Imperial generals only been as energetic in offensive measures as they had shown themselves obstinate in defence, they might have harassed his rear, delayed his progress, and eventually brought him to a decisive engagement under many disadvantages. But the Imperial Commissioners at Kweiling did nothing, being apparently well satisfied with having rid themselves of the presence of such troublesome neighbours.

On 12th of June the Taepings attacked the small town of Taou in Hoonan with better success. Some resistance was offered, and one of the Taeping Wangs, known as the "Southern King," was killed. This was a great loss, because he was a man of some education, and had taken the most prominent part in the organisation of the Taeping rebellion. General Gordon inclined to the opinion that he was the real originator of the whole rising. His loss was a severe blow to the Taepings, whose confidence in themselves and their cause was alike rudely shaken. They could not however turn back, for fear of the force at Kweiling, and to halt

for any time was scarcely less dangerous. Necessity compelled them therefore to press on, and in August they captured the three small towns of Kiaho, Ching, and Kweyang. Their next march was both long and forced. Overrunning the whole adjacent country, they appeared early in the month of September before the strong and important town of Changsha, situated on the river Seang, and only fifty miles south of the large lake Tungting.

At this town, the capital of Hoonan, some vigorous preparations had been made to withstand them. Not merely was the usual garrison stationed there, but it so happened that Tseng Kwofan, a man of great ability and some considerable resolution, was residing near the town at the time. Tseng Kwofan had held several offices in the service, and as a member of the Hanlin enjoyed a high position and reputation; but he was absent from the capital on one of those frequent periods of retirement to their native province which the officials of China have to make on the occasion of any near relative's death.

When tidings of the approach of the Taepings reached him he threw himself with all the forces he could collect into Changsha. At the same time he ordered the local militia to assemble as rapidly as possible in the neighbourhood, in order to harass the movements of the enemy. He called upon all those who had the means to show their duty to the state and sovereign by raising recruits or by promising rewards to those volunteers who would serve in the army against the rebels. Had the example of Tseng Kwofan been followed generally, it is not too much to say that the Taepings would never have got to Nanking. As it was, he set the first example of true patriotism, and he had the immediate satisfaction of saving Changsha.

When the Taepings reached Changsha they found the gates closed and the walls manned. They proceeded to lay siege to it; they cut off its supplies, and they threatened the garrison with extermination. They even attempted to carry it by storm on three separate occasions. During eighty days the siege went on; but the Taepings were then compelled to admit that they were as far from success as ever. They had suffered very considerable losses, including another of their Wangs, the Western King, and although it was said that the loss of the Imperialists was larger, they could better afford it. On the 1st December they accordingly abandoned the siege and resumed their march northwards. They crossed the Tungting Lake on boats and junks which they had seized, and secured the town of Yochow on the Yangtsekiang without meeting any resistance. Here they captured much war material, including a large supply of gunpowder left by the great Chinese Viceroy, Wou Sankwei, of the seventeenth century. From Yochow they

hastened down the river. The important city of Hankow surrendered without a blow. The not less important town of Wouchang, on the opposite or southern bank of the river, was then attacked, and after a siege of a fortnight carried by storm. The third town of Hanyang, which completes the busy human hive where the Han joins the great river, did not attempt any resistance.

These successes raised the Taepings from the depths of despair to the heights of hope. The capture of such wealthy places dispelled all their doubt and discouragement. They were able to repay themselves for the losses and hardships they had undergone, and the prize they had thus secured furnished ground for hoping for more. But even now it was no part of their mission to stand still. They waited at Hankow only long enough to attach to their cause the many thousands attracted to Tien Wang's flag by these successes. The possibility of pursuit by Tseng Kwofan at the head of the warlike levies of Hoonan, where each brave is considered equal to two from another province, was still present to their minds. But he unfortunately rested content with his laurels, while the Taepings swept like an irresistible wave or torrent down the valley of the Yangtsekiang.

The capture of Kiukiang, a town situated on the river near the northern extremity of the lake Poyang, and of Ganking followed in quick succession, and on 8th March the Taepings sat down before Nanking, the old capital of the Mings. The siege lasted only sixteen days. Notwithstanding that there was a considerable Manchu force in the Tartar city, which might easily have been defended apart from the Chinese and much larger town, the resistance offered was singularly faint-hearted. The Taepings succeeded in blowing in one of the gates. The townspeople fraternised with the assailants, and the very Manchus, who had looked so valiant in face of Sir Hugh Gough's force ten years before, now surrendered their lives and their honour after a mere show of resistance to a force which was nothing better than an armed rabble. The Manchu colony of Nanking, to the number of some 4000 families, had evidently fallen off from its high renown. Instead of dying at their posts, they threw themselves on the pity of the Taeping leader. Their cowardice helped them not; of 20,000 Manchus not 100 escaped. The tale rests on irrefragable evidence. "We killed them all to the infant in arms; we left not a root to sprout from; and the bodies of the slain we cast into the Yangtse."

The capture of Nanking and this sweeping massacre of the dominant race seemed to point the inevitable finger of fate at the Tatsing dynasty. It was no longer possible to regard Tien Wang and his miscellaneous gathering as an enemy beneath contempt. Without

achieving any remarkable success, having indeed been defeated whenever they were opposed with the least resolution, the Taepings found themselves in possession of the second city in the Empire. With that city they acquired the control of the navigation of the Great River, and they cut off the better part of the communications between the northern and southern halves of the Empire. They abandoned Hankow, and confined their occupation of the river banks to the part between Kiukiang and Nanking; but they determined to secure the Grand Canal, which enters the river east of the city. On 1st April 1853 they occupied Chinkiangfoo, on the southern side of the river, and they held it, but although they also captured Yangchow on the northern bank, they evacuated it in a few days. These successes were obtained without any loss, as all the garrisons fled at the mere approach of the dreaded Taepings.

The Imperialist authorities seemed paralysed by the rapidity and success of the rebels, who devoted all their efforts to strengthening the defences of Nanking and to provisioning it in view of all eventualities. But the thoughts of Tien Wang and his immediate advisers were still of offensive and forward measures, and when Nanking was equipped for defence a large part of the Taeping army was ordered to march against Peking. At this time it was computed that the total number of the Taepings did not fall short of 80,000 trustworthy fighting men, while there were perhaps more than 100,000 Chinese pressed into their service as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The lines of Nanking and the batteries along the Yangtsekiang were the creation of the forced labour of the population which had not fled before the Taepings.

On the 12th of May an army, stated to consist of 200,000 men, but probably consisting of less than half that number of combatants, crossed the Yangtse and marched northwards. It would be uninteresting to name the many small places they captured on their way, but on 19th June they reached Kaifong, the capital of Honan, and once of China itself. They had thus transferred in a few weeks their advanced posts from the Yangtsekiang to the Hwangho, or Yellow River.

The garrison of Kaifong made a resolute defence, and repulsed the Taepings, who at once abandoned the siege in accordance with their usual custom, and resumed their march. They succeeded in crossing the Yellow River under the eyes of the Kaifong garrison, and they then attacked Hwaiking,an important prefectural town,where they encountered a stout resistance. They besieged it for two months, and then had to give up the attempt. Forces were gathering from different directions, and it became necessary to baffle their opponents. They marched westwards for some distance along the southern bank of the Hwangho,

turned suddenly north at Yuenking, and on reaching Pingyang they again turned in an easterly direction, and secured the Lin Limming Pass which leads into the Metropolitan province of Pechihli. The whole of the autumn of 1853 was taken up with these manœuvres, and it was on 30th September that the Taepings first appeared in the province containing the capital. They met with little or no opposition. They had mystified their pursuers, and surprised the inhabitants of the districts through which they passed. Having forced the Limming Pass, the Taepings found no difficulty in occupying the towns on the south-west border of Pechihli. The defeat of the Manchu garrison in a pass that was considered almost impregnable gave the Taepings the prestige of victory, and the towns opened their gates one after another. They crossed the Hootoo River on a bridge of boats, which they constructed themselves, and then occupied the town of Shinchow; on 21st October they reached Tsing, about twenty miles south of Tientsin and only one hundred from Peking; but beyond this point neither then nor at any other time did the rebels succeed in getting.

The forcing of the Limming Pass produced great confusion at Peking. It was no longer a question of suffering subjects and disturbed provinces. The capital of the Empire, the very person of the Emperor, was in imminent danger of destruction at the hands of a ruthless foe. The city was denuded of troops. Levies were hastily summoned from Manchuria in order to defend the line of the Peiho and the approaches to the capital. Had the Taepings shown better generalship there is no saying but that they would have succeeded in capturing it, as the Imperialists had left quite unguarded the approach by Chingting and Paoting, and the capture of Peking would have sounded the knell of the Manchu dynasty. But the Taepings did not seize the chance—if it were one—and they were far from being in the best of spirits. They had advanced far, but it looked as if it was into the lion's mouth. Their march had been a remarkable one, but it had been attended with no striking success. In their front was the Tientsin militia, strengthened by a large if nondescript force, led by the Mongol chief Sankolinsin. In their rear the levies of Hoonan, of the vast district that had suffered from their exactions, were closing up, and soon they were closely beleaguered in a hastily-fortified camp at Tsinghai. In this they were besieged from the end of October to the beginning of March 1854. The Imperial generals, afraid to risk an assault, hoped to starve them out, and so they might have done had not Tien Wang sent a fresh army to extricate this force from its peril. Then the retreat began, but, beset by assailants from every side, it was slow and disastrous. The struggle went on until March 1855, when Sankolinsin was able to declare that

not a Taeping remained north of the Yellow River. Only a very small portion of the two armies sent to capture Peking ever returned to the headquarters of Tien Wang.

While these events, and others that do not call for description as being of minor importance, were in progress, symptoms of disintegration were already beginning to reveal themselves in the camp at Nanking. After its capture Tien Wang himself retired into the interior of his palace and never afterwards appeared in public. All his time was passed in the harem, and the opportunity was thus given his more ambitious lieutenants to assert themselves. Tung Wang, the "Eastern King," became principal Minister. He, too, claimed to have communion with Heaven, and on celestial advice he began to get rid of those of his comrades who opposed his schemes. He even summoned Tien Wang to his presence and reproved him for his proceedings. A plot was then formed against Tung Wang, and he was slain with three of his brothers, in the presence of Tien Wang, by another of the Taeping chiefs. Nor did the slaughter stop there, for it is alleged, although the numbers must not be accepted literally, that 200,000 of his partisans—men, women, and children—were massacred. These internal dissensions threatened to break up the Taeping confederacy, and no doubt they would have done so but for the appearance of the most remarkable man associated with the movement, and one of the most heroic figures in China's history.

A young officer, rejoicing in the innumerable Chinese name of Li, had attracted Tung Wang's favourable notice, and was by him entrusted with a small command. It will be more convenient to speak of him by his subsequent title of Chung Wang, or the "Faithful King." He distinguished himself in his first enterprise by defeating a large Imperial army besieging Chinkiang, and in relieving the garrison when on the point of surrender. But while engaged on this task the Imperialists closed in on his rear and cut off his retreat back to Nanking, whither Tien Wang hastily summoned him to return. He endeavoured to make his way along the northern bank, but was checked at Loohoo by the ex-Triad Chang Kwoliang, the same who deserted the Taepings in Kwangsi. Chang had crossed the river to oppose him, and Chung Wang, hastily conveying his army over the river, fell upon and destroyed the weakened force that the Imperial general had left there, under General Chi, who committed suicide. Chang Kwoliang crossed after him, but only to suffer defeat, and Chung Wang made his way into Nanking. He then attacked the main Imperial army before its walls, under the Emperor's generalissimo Heang Yung, and drove it out of its entrenchments. Heang took his defeat so much to heart that he also committed suicide,

but Chang Kwoliang made a supreme effort to retrieve the day, and succeeded in retaking all the lost positions, with the exception of the Yashua Gate of Nanking.

While these events were in progress in the Taeping capital, some events that must be briefly referred to happened on a different scene. The Triads, aided by the mob, rose in Shanghai, overcame the Emperor's officers and garrison, and on 7th September 1853 obtained complete mastery of the native city. The foreign settlement was placed in a state of siege, the men-of-war covered the approaches to the factories, and a volunteer corps was carefully organised and constantly employed. Then an Imperial army re-appeared on the scene, and laid siege to Shanghai, but it was conducted with no skill, and the situation remained unchanged. After twelve months' delay the French Admiral, Laguerre, decided to help the Imperialists, and he began to bombard the walls in December 1854. He combined with them in an assault, and 400 French sailors and the Imperialists attacked the walls which had been breached. The assault ended disastrously, for the rebels defended the houses, and at last drove back the assailants with much loss. The pressure of famine compelled the besieged some months later to make a *sortie*, when the Imperialists recovered the town. A similar rising, with a similar result, occurred at Amoy. The insurgents caused a great loss of life and property, but in the end the authorities gained the upper hand. These events compelled the foreign consuls and their Governments to reconsider their policy, which had been one of sympathy towards the Taepings, and gradually the conviction became universal that it would be well for civilization and trade if a speedy end were put to the Taeping rebellion. But for our own quarrel and war with the central Government these views would have borne fruit in acts at an earlier date than they did.

During the campaign of 1858 the Taepings more than held their own through the courage and activity shown by Chung Wang. He relieved the town of Ganking when closely pressed by Tseng Kwofan, and although he could not prevent a fresh beleaguerment of Nanking, it caused him no apprehension because the Emperor's generals were well known to have no intention of attacking. Notwithstanding this, it was clearly foreseen that in time Nanking must fall by starvation. In these straits Chung Wang proved the saviour of his party. The city was invested on three sides; only one remained open for any one to carry out the news of Tien Wang's necessities. In this moment of peril there was a general reluctance to quit the besieged town, but unless someone did, and that quickly, the place was doomed. In this supreme moment Chung Wang offered to go himself. At first the proposal was received

with a chorus of disapproval, but at last, when he went to the door of Tien Wang's palace and beat the gong which lay there for those who claimed justice, he succeeded in overcoming the opposition to his plan, and in impressing upon his audience the real gravity of the situation. His request was granted, and having nominated trusty men to the command during his absence, he left by the southern gate. A few days later and Tseng's last levies constructed their fortified camp in front of it. The Emperor's generals unfortunately reverted to their old dilatory measures, because they failed to realise the importance with which the possession of Nanking still invested the Taepings. Without that city they would have been nothing but a band of brigands, who could easily have been dispersed. With it they could claim the status of a separate dynasty. Yet the capture of Nanking was put off until the last act of all. These sapient leaders, whose military knowledge was antiquated, acted with an indifference to the most obvious considerations, that would have been ludicrous if it had not been a further injury to a suffering people. In 1858 their apathy was such that it not merely saved Nanking but played the whole game into the hands of Chung Wang.

That chief succeeded in collecting a small force, with which he at once began to harass Tseng's army. By transferring his army rapidly from one side of the river to the other, he succeeded in supplying his deficiency in numbers; but with all his activity he could make no impression on the mass of his opponents. He even got the worst of it in several skirmishes, but by a supreme effort he succeeded in overpowering the Imperial force north of the river at Poukou, and thus relieved the pressure on Nanking. But this was only momentary, and after a doubtful and wearisome campaign throughout the year 1859, the situation again became one of great gravity for the besieged Taepings who were now confined to Nanking and a few other towns in the Yangtse valley.

In this extremity Chung Wang conceived a fresh plan for extricating his cause from the difficulties that beset it. By January 1860 all Chung Wang's arrangements were completed. He distributed considerable sums of money among his men to put them in good humour, and then set forth. His first movements were directed to misleading his enemy as to his real object, and having succeeded in this he marched as rapidly as possible towards the important harbour of Hangchow, in the bay of the same name, south of Shanghai. On 19th March he succeeded in capturing the Chinese city, but the Tartar portion held out, and a relieving army compelled Chung Wang to retire. What seemed an unredeemed calamity proved a stroke of

good fortune, for the Imperialists had sent their best troops to pursue him, and thus materially weakened the force before Nanking. Chung Wang saw his chance, and while the Imperialists were rejoicing in Hangchow at its recovery, he hastened back by forced marches, and fell upon the besieging army. In the desperate engagement that followed 5000 Imperialists were slain, and the remainder were driven ignominiously from the field. Thus, at the blackest moment of their fortunes, did Chung Wang succeed in delivering his kinsmen who had so long been shut up in Nanking. This siege had then continued with more or less interruption for seven years.

Nor did Chung Wang's success stop here. He fought a battle at Tayan with his old adversary Chang Kwoliang, and defeated him with a loss of 10,000 men. At the height of the engagement Chang Kwoliang was drowned while crossing a canal, and this decided the battle. Encouraged by these successes, and with increased forces—for most of the prisoners he took were incorporated in his army—Chung Wang assumed the offensive, and after winning no fewer than three regular engagements, he succeeded in capturing the important city of Soochow, on the Grand Canal, and this became his chief quarters during the remainder of this long struggle. By these successes he obtained fresh supplies, and commanded the great and hitherto little touched resources of the wealthy province of Kiangsu. It was thus that he was brought into the neighbourhood of Shanghai, and made those attempts to acquire possession of the Chinese city which were set forth in the last chapter, and which were the true cause of the inception of the foreign, or foreign-trained force, that began with Ward.

After his repulse at Shanghai, Chung Wang was recalled to Nanking. He went reluctantly, leaving Hoo Wang, "the Protecting King," as his deputy at Soochow. He found there everything in confusion, and that Tien Wang, instead of laying in rice for a fresh siege, was absorbed in his devotion and amusements, while the other chiefs were engaged in plundering their own subjects. Dissatisfied with what he saw at Nanking, Chung Wang again took the field, and transferred the scene of hostilities to the province of Kiangsi, but although he showed great activity, and marched 800 miles, he gained little, and, indeed, was defeated on one or two occasions. Nor could he save Ganking, which, after being besieged for three years, surrendered to Tseng Kwotsiuen, and thus all hope of succour from the west, or of retreat there, in the last resort, was removed from the hard-beset garrison of Nanking. As some set-off to this reverse, Chung Wang captured the ports of Ningpo and Hangchow, after a gallant defence

by a small Manchu garrison. The Taepings could scarcely now hope for durable success, but their capacity for inflicting an enormous amount of injury was evidently not destroyed. Chung Wang's energy and military skill alone sustained their cause, but the lovers of rapine and turbulence flocked in their thousands to his standard.

In the Yangtse valley—in fact, wherever Chung Wang was not—the Taepings met with many reverses that counterbalanced these successes. Several Chinese armies approached Nanking from different sides, and Tien Wang in a state of panic summoned Chung Wang, his only champion, back to his side. That warrior obeyed the summons, leaving Mow Wang in charge of Soochow, but he could do no good. He found nothing but disorder at the Taeping capital, and no troops with which he could venture to assume the offensive against the powerful army, in numbers at all events, that the two Tsengs had drawn round Nanking. In this position his troubles were increased by the suspicion of Tien Wang, who deprived him of all his honours, and banished him to the province of Anhui, adjacent to both Kiangsi and Kiangsu, and joined with them in the same viceroyalty. This order to depart was a relief to Chung Wang, who was thus able to complete his own measures for the defence of Soochow and the other places along the Canal that had fallen to his arms. He saw clearly that the success of the foreigners in keeping him back at a distance of thirty miles from Shanghai, and in expelling him from Ningpo, signified his being shut in just as effectively on the east, as he already was on the west by the fall of every place except Nanking, and by the miserable inefficiency of the garrison in that place. He may have really despaired, but this Chinese Frederick was resolved, if he could, to break his chains. Unfortunately for him, a new and more formidable antagonist than any he had met appeared on the scene at this juncture, in the person of Gordon.

This summary of the progress and nature of the Taeping rebellion up to the 25th March 1863 when Gordon assumed the command will make clear what follows to the general reader. It would be as great a mistake to minimise the fighting military strength of the Taepings as it would be to exaggerate it. There was a moment, years before Gordon came on the scene, when the Imperial commanders by a little energy and promptitude might have stamped out the rebellion; but having missed the opportunity the military skill and daring of Chung Wang had revived the Taeping cause, and made it more formidable than ever from a military point of view. The blunders of the Imperial commanders precluded any confidence as to their superior numbers and resources effecting their natural result, and although Gordon himself declared that the Taeping cause was a lost one before he assumed the

command, no cause could be pronounced irretrievable with a leader so expert and resolute as Chung Wang, and opponents so incapable and craven as his were. But another thing was certainly incontestable, and that was that the Taepings could not in any sense be regarded as patriots. Their regular mode of conduct stamped them at once as undiscriminating plunderers of all, whether Chinese or Manchu, who had the misfortune to fall into their hands, and their acts of cruelty surpassed description and even belief. Some instances of the massacres they perpetrated have been mentioned, but these were only a few out of the many that stained, or rather characterised, their usual proceedings. It will suffice to say that their ordinary way of dealing with their prisoners was to crucify them, and there will then be no difficulty in accepting the conclusion that the Chinese population thoroughly detested them, and regarded them as a scourge rather than as deliverers.

Nor does a closer examination of the system of administration set up at Nanking by the leader Tien Wang raise one's opinion of the cause or its promoters. The foreign missionaries long thought that the Taepings were the agents of Christianity, and that their success would lead to the conversion of China. That faith died hard, but at last in 1860 a missionary had to confess that after visiting Nanking "he could find nothing of Christianity but its name falsely applied to a system of revolting idolatry," and out of that and other irresistible testimony resulted the conclusion that the conversion of China by the agency of the Taepings was a delusion. The missionaries were not alone in their belief among foreigners. The Consuls and their Governments entertained a hope that the Taepings might establish an administration which would be less difficult to deal with than they had found the existing one at Peking. They attempted to, and did in an informal manner, establish some relations with Tien Wang. They acquainted him with the articles of the Treaty of Tientsin, and they requested him to conform with its conditions. On a second occasion Sir George Bonham, our head representative in China, even honoured him with a visit; but closer acquaintance in the case of our diplomatists, as of the missionaries, stripped the Taepings of the character with which interested persons would wish they had been invested. From the first feeling of friendship and sympathy there consequently ensued a slow but steady revulsion, until at last the general feeling was that the Taepings were little more than marauders, and as such a scourge to the country and a standing injury to the trade and interests of Europeans. Then came the desire to see the rising suppressed, and finally the disillusionment culminated in active measures being taken to assist the Imperial

Government in suppressing a rebellion which had defied all its efforts for more than ten years. Of these measures the appointment of Major Gordon to the command of the Ever Victorious Army was both the last and the most effectual in producing the desired result.

CHAPTER V.

THE EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY.

THE appointment of any English officer would have led to some improvement in the direction of the Chinese Imperial forces assembled for the suppression of the Taeping rebellion ; but the nature of the operations to be carried out, which were exclusively the capture of a number of towns strongly stockaded and protected by rivers and canals, rendered it specially necessary that that officer should be an engineer. In addition to the advantages of his scientific training, Major Gordon enjoyed the benefit of the preliminary course he had gone through under General Staveley. He had seen the Taepings fight, and something also of the defence and capture of their positions. He had also thoroughly mastered the topographical features of the region in and beyond which he was about to conduct military operations. There is little doubt that he assumed the command with a plan of campaign already decided upon in his brain. The Taepings with whom he had to deal derived their power and importance from the possession of Soochow, and from their access to several ports whence they obtained arms and ammunition. Therefore the capture of that city and the cutting off of their supplies represented his principal objects. Very much had to be accomplished before Soochow could be even approached, and the main object of Gordon's first campaign was the capture of Quinsan, which he saw would be far more suitable as headquarters for him and his force than the existing one at Sungkiang. Even before that could be attempted many matters had to be arranged. Not only had Major Gordon to relieve more than one beleaguered loyal garrison, but he had to establish his authority over his own force, which was on the verge of mutiny and clamouring for the return of Burgevine. His own opinion of that force was given in the following letter to a military friend :—

"I hope you do not think that I have a magnificent army. You never did see such a rabble as it was ; and although I think I have improved it, it is still sadly wanting. Now both officers and men, although

ragged and perhaps slightly disreputable, are in capital order and well disposed."

Before entering on these matters the following letter to his mother will be read with interest, as showing what was in Gordon's mind at the time he assumed the command. The letter was written on 24th March 1863, the day before he rode over to Sungkiang to take up his command.

"I am afraid you will be much vexed at my having taken the command of the Sungkiang force, and that I am now a mandarin. I have taken the step on consideration. I think that anyone who contributes to putting down this rebellion fulfils a humane task, and I also think tends a great deal to open China to civilization. I will not act rashly, and I trust to be able soon to return to England; at the same time, I will remember your and my father's wishes, and endeavour to remain as short a time as possible. I can say that, if I had not accepted the command, I believe the force would have been broken up and the rebellion gone on in its misery for years. I trust this will not now be the case, and that I may soon be able to comfort you on this subject. You must not fret on this matter. I think I am doing a good service. . . . I keep your likeness before me, and can assure you and my father that I will not be rash, and that as soon as I can conveniently, and with due regard to the object I have in view, I will return home."

Major Gordon rode over to Sungkiang, situated on the line of the thirty-mile radius from Shanghai, on 25th March, and the following morning he inspected his force. He delivered a brief address, stating that there was no intention to dismiss any of them, and that so long as they behaved well he would carefully uphold their rights and interests. These words had a tranquillising effect, and Major Gordon's assumption of the command might be described as being then ratified by the Ever Victorious Army. The good he effected was very nearly undone two days later by the civil magistrate hanging some soldiers for marauding. After the affair looked like becoming serious, Gordon succeeded in pacifying his men and restoring order. In this state of affairs it was most desirable that no time should be lost in resuming active operations, and the Taeping successes at Taitsan and Fushan rendered them doubly necessary.

The first task entrusted to Major Gordon was the relief of Chanzu, which was closely assailed by the Taepings and believed to be on the point of surrendering. Chanzu lies some distance south of Fushan and west of Taitsan, and its garrison at this time was composed of Taepings who had deserted their comrades and joined the Imperial forces. Several attempts had been made to relieve it, but without success, and

Gordon was urged by his Chinese colleagues to signalise his assumption of the command by carrying out this most desirable and necessary task. The best means of approaching it was by the river, and on 31st March Gordon accordingly sailed from Shanghai to the mouth of the Fushan Creek. His force numbered about 1200 men, and included 200 artillery with four 12-pounders and one 32-pounder. The enemy had constructed some stockades at Fushan, outside the ruined city of that name, and Gordon attacked these on the 4th April. He began with a heavy bombardment, and when he ordered the advance the Taepings, disheartened by his fire, evacuated their positions and retired with very little loss to either side. Gordon then marched on Chanzu, ten miles south of Fushan, and reached it without further fighting. The relief of Chanzu being thus effected, Gordon hastened back to Sungkiang, where he arrived little more than a week after he left it. The success and swiftness of this movement greatly impressed Li Hung Chang, who publicly recorded his great satisfaction at the very different manner in which the new commander transacted business from Burgevine.

In a letter to the British Consul at Shanghai, Mr Markham, Li wrote:—

"The officer Gordon having received command of the Ever Victorious Army, having immediately on doing so proceeded to Fushan, working day and night, having worked harmoniously with the other generals there, having exerted himself and attacked with success the walled city of Fushan and relieved Chanzu, and at once returned to Sungkiang and organised his force for further operations to sweep out the rebels, having proved himself valiant, able, and honest, I have congratulated myself and memorialised his Imperial Majesty to confer on him the dignity and office of Tsung-ping (Brigadier-General), to enable me to consider him as part of my command. Again, since Gordon has taken the command, he has exerted himself to organise the force, and though he has had but one month he has got the force into shape. As the people and place are charmed with him, as he has already given me returns of the organisation of the force, the formation of each regiment, and the expenses ordinary and extraordinary in the clearest manner, wishing to drill our troops and save our money, it is evident that he fully comprehends the state of affairs."

On his return to Sungkiang, Major Gordon devoted himself to the thorough reorganisation of his force. He began by abolishing the system of rewards for the capture of towns, and he forbade plundering on pain of death. These were strong steps to take with a force such as that he had under him, but he succeeded in making them acceptable by increasing the pay of the men, and by substituting

on his staff English officers—the services of a few being lent him by the commanding officer at Shanghai—for the adventurers who had followed Ward and Burgevine. The total strength of the force was fixed at 4000 men, and his artillery consisted of four siege and two field batteries. The men were paid regularly by a Chinese official appointed by Li Hung Chang, and the cost to the Chinese Government averaged £20,000 a month. At the same time, Gordon collected a pontoon train and practised his men in all the work of attacking fortified places before he ventured to assume the offensive. He also organised a flotilla of small steamers and Chinese gunboats capable of navigating the canals and creeks which traversed the province of Kiangsu in all directions. Of these the principal was the steamer *Hyson*—a paddle-wheel vessel drawing 3½ feet of water, armed with a 32-pounder in her bow, and a 12-pounder at her stern, and possessing the faculty of moving over the bed of a creek on her wheels—and it took a very active and prominent part in the subsequent operations.

The strategy on which Major Gordon at once decided, and from which he never deviated, was to cut off the Taeping communications with the sea and the river Yangtsekiang, whence they were able to obtain supplies of ammunition and arms from little-scrupulous foreign traders. The expulsion of the Taepings from the Shanghai district and from Ningpo had done something towards the success of this project, but they still held Hangchow and the line of the Yangtsekiang to within ten miles of the entrance of the Woosung River on which Shanghai stands. The loss of Fushan and Chanzu had made an indent in this territory, and in order to complete this breach in the Taeping position, Gordon had decided and made all his plans to attack Quinsan, when he was compelled to defer it in consequence of the following incident.

The rude repulse at Taitsan had been, it will be recollected, the culminating misfortune of the force before Gordon's assumption of the command, but a Chinese army under Li Hung Chang's brother, San Tajin, continued to remain in the neighbourhood of the place. The Taeping commander laid a trap for him, into which he fell in what was, for a Chinese officer fully acquainted with the fact that treachery formed part of the usages of war in China, a very credulous manner. He expressed a desire to come over, presents and vows were exchanged, and at a certain hour he was to surrender one of the gates. The Imperial troops went to take possession, and were even admitted within the walls, when they were suddenly attacked on both flanks by the treacherous Taepings. Fifteen hundred of San Tajin's men were

killed or captured, and he himself was severely wounded. In consequence of this reverse, the main Chinese army, under General Ching, a brave but inexperienced officer, could not co-operate with Gordon against Quinsan, and it was then decided that Gordon himself should proceed against Taitsan, and read the triumphant foe at that place a lesson. It was computed that its garrison numbered 10,000 men, and that it had several European deserters and renegades among its leaders, while the total force under Gordon did not exceed 3000 men. Their recent successes had also inspired the Taepings with confidence, and, judging by the previous encounters, there seemed little reason to anticipate a satisfactory, or at least a speedy issue of the affair for the Imperialists. That the result was more favourable was entirely due to Gordon's military capacity and genius.

Major Gordon acted with remarkable and characteristic promptitude. He only heard of the catastrophe to San Tajin on 27th April; on 29th April, after two forced marches across country, he appeared before Taitsan, and captured a stockade in front of one of its gates. Bad weather prevented operations the next day, but on 1st May, Gordon having satisfied himself by personal examination that the western gate offered the best point of attack, began the bombardment soon after daybreak. Two stone stockades in front of the gate had first to be carried, and these, after twenty minutes' firing, were evacuated on part of Gordon's force threatening the retreat of their garrison back to the town. The capture of these stockades began and ended the operations on that day. The next morning Gordon stationed one regiment in front of the north gate to cut off the retreat of the garrison in that direction, and then resumed his main attack on the west gate. By this time he had been joined by some of his gunboats, and their fire, aided by the artillery he had with him, gradually made a good impression on the wall, especially after the guns had been drawn as near as 200 yards to it. The breach was then deemed sufficiently practicable; the gunboats went up the creek as near the walls as possible, and the two regiments advanced to the assault. The Taepings fought desperately in the breach itself, and no progress was made. It is probable that a reverse would have followed had not the howitzers continued to throw shells over the wall, thus inflicting heavy losses on the Taepings, who swarmed in their thousands behind. At that critical moment Gordon directed another regiment to escalade the wall at a point which the Taepings had left unguarded, and the appearance of these fresh troops on their flank at once decided the day, and induced the Taeping leaders to order a retreat. The Taepings lost heavily, but the loss of the Ever Victorious Army was in

proportion equally great. The latter had twenty men killed and 142 wounded, one European officer killed and six wounded. But the capture of Taitsan under all the circumstances was an exceptionally brilliant and decisive affair. With it may be said to have begun the military reputation of the young commander, whose admirable dispositions had retrieved a great disaster and inflicted a rude blow on the confidence of a daring enemy.

From Taitsan he marched to Quinsan; but his force was not yet thoroughly in hand, and wished to return to Sungkiang, in accordance with their practice under Ward of spending their pay and prize-money after any successful affair before attempting another. Gordon yielded on this occasion the more easily because he was impressed by the strength of Quinsan, and also because his ammunition had run short. But his trouble with his men was not yet over, and he had to face a serious mutiny on the part of his officers. For improved economy and efficiency Gordon appointed an English commissariat officer, named Cookesley, to control all the stores, and he gave him the rank of lieutenant-colonel. This gave umbrage to the majors in command of regiments, who presented a request that they should be allowed the higher rank and pay of lieutenant-colonel; and when this was refused they sent in their resignations, which were accepted. The affair was nearly taking a serious turn, as the troops refused to march; but Gordon's firmness overcame the difficulty. Two of the majors were reinstated, and the others dismissed, but this incident finally decided Gordon to change his headquarters from Sungkiang to some place where the bad traditions of Ward and Burgevine were not in force. The active operations now undertaken against Quinsan served to distract the attention of the men, and to strengthen their commander's influence over them. General Gordon's own description of this affair is well worth quoting:—

"The force arrived at their old camping ground near the east gate of Quinsan on the evening of 27th of May. General Ching had established some five or six very strong stockades at this place, and, thanks to the steamer *Hyson*, had been able to hold them against the repeated attacks of the rebels. The line of rebel stockades was not more than 800 yards from his position. The force encamped near the stockades; and at daybreak of the 28th the 4th and 5th Regiments, with the field artillery, moved to attack them. The right stockade was attacked in front, and its right flank turned, on seeing which the rebels retreated. They were in large force, and had it not been for the numerous bridges they had constructed in their rear, they would have suffered much, as the pursuit was pressed beyond the north gate close

up to a stockade they held at the north-east angle of the city. Captain Clayton, 99th Regiment, a very gallant officer who had gained the goodwill and admiration of every one of the force, was unfortunately wounded in the attack, and died some months afterwards of his wounds. Our loss was two killed and sixteen wounded.

"General Ching was now most anxious to get me to attack the east gate on the following day. His object was that he had written to the Futai Li, who had in turn passed the statement on to Peking, to say that he had his stockades on the edge of the ditch, and merely wanted a boat to get into the city. This he showed by a plan. The east gate looked, if possible, more unpromising than it did before, and I declined to attack it without reconnoitring the other side of the city. Accordingly, the next day, 29th May, I went in the *Hyson* with General Ching and Li Hung Chang to reconnoitre the west side, and after three hours' steaming came within 1000 yards of the main canal, which runs from the west gate of Quinsan to Soochow. At the junction of the creek we came up with this main canal at the village of Chunye. This place is eight miles from Quinsan, and twelve from Soochow. The only road between these two places runs along the bank of the creek. The rebels had here on its bank two stockades of no great strength, and about 500 yards inland, they had, near the village of Chunye, a very strong stone fort. About 1000 yards from the stockades the creek was staked across. At the time of our arrival large numbers of troops were passing towards and from Soochow with horsemen, etc. We opened fire on them and on their boats. The rebels seemed perfectly amazed at seeing us, and were ready for a run. General Ching was as sulky as a bear when he was informed that I thought it advisable to take these stockades the next day, and to attack on this side of the city.

"At dawn on 30th May the 4th Regiment, 350 strong, with field artillery, all in boats and *Hyson*, accompanied by some fifty Imperial gunboats, started for Chunye. The Imperial gunboats started some hours previous, but had contented themselves with halting one and a half miles from the stockades. The whole flotilla—some eighty boats, with their large while sails and decorated with the usual amount of various-coloured flags, with the *Hyson* in the middle—presented a very picturesque sight, and must have made the garrison of Quinsan feel uncomfortable, as they could see the smallest move from the high hill inside the city, and knew, of course, more than we did of the importance of the stockades about to be attacked.

"At noon we came up to the stakes before alluded to, and landed the infantry. The Imperial gunboats, now very brave, pulled up the

stakes, and a general advance with the steamer and troops was made. The rebels stood for a minute, and then vacated the stockades and ran. The reason of the rebels defending these stockades so badly was on account of the ill-feeling between the chiefs in charge of Quinsan and Chunye, and the neglect of the former to furnish rice to the latter.

"The *Hyson* [with Gordon on board] now steamed up towards Soochow at a slow pace, owing to the innumerable boats that crowded the creek, which, vacated by their owners, were drifting about with their sails up in every direction. The rebels were in clusters along the bank, marching in an orderly way towards Soochow. The *Hyson* opened fire on them and hurried their progress, and, hanging on their rear, kept up a steady fire till they reached Ta Edin, where a large arch bridge spanned the creek, and where the rebels had constructed a splendid stone fort. We expected that the rebels would make a stand here, but they merely fired one shot, which was answered by a shell from the *Hyson*, which went into the embrasure, and the rebels continued their flight. It became rather hazardous to pass this fort and leave it unoccupied, with the number of armed rebels who were between Chunye and Ta Edin. The *Hyson*, moreover, had no force on board of any importance. There were with me five or six Europeans and some thirty Chinamen—gunners, etc. However, six of us landed, and held the fort somehow till more Imperialists came up, while the *Hyson* pushed on towards Soochow.

"The *Hyson* continued the pursuit, threading her way through the boats of all descriptions which crowded the creek, and harassing the rear of the rebel columns which extended along the road for over a mile. About two miles from Ta Edin another stone fort was passed without a shot being fired; this was Siaon Edin. Everything was left in the forts by the rebels. Soon after passing this place the steamer headed some 400 rebels, and Captain Davidson ran her into the bank, and took 150 of them prisoners on board the *Hyson*—rather a risk, considering the crew of that vessel and her size. Soon after this four horsemen were descried riding at full speed about a mile in rear of the steamer. They came up, passed the steamer amid a storm of bullets, and joined the rebel column. One of them was struck off his horse, but the others coolly waited for him, and one of them stopped and took him up behind him. They deserved to get off. About three miles further on another stockade of stone was passed at a broken bridge called Waiquaidong, and the pursuit was carried on to about three-quarters of a mile from Soochow. It was now getting late (6 P.M.), and we did not know if the rebels in our rear might not have occupied the stockades, in which case we should have had to find another route back. On our return we met

crowds of villagers, who burnt at our suggestion the houses in the forts at Waiquaidong and Siaon Edin, and took the boats that were in the creek.

"We met many boats that had appeared deserted on our passing up sailing merrily towards Soochow, but which, when they saw the red and green of the steamer and heard her whistle, were immediately run into the bank and were deserted. Just before Siaon Edin was reached we came on a large body of rebels, who opened a sharp fire of rifles on us striking the gun twice. They had got under cover of a bridge, which, however, after a short delay, we managed to enfilade with a charge of grape and thus cleared them out. We then steamed into the bank and took in more prisoners. Four chiefs, one a Wang, galloped past on horseback; and although not two yards from the steamer, they got away. The Wang got shoved into the water and lost his pony. A party of rebels were encamped in Siaon Edin, not dreaming of any further annoyance for that night, and were accordingly astonished to hear the steamer's whistle, and rushed out in amazement, to meet a shell at the entrance, which killed two of them. The steamer now pushed on to Ta Edin, and found it unoccupied; while waiting there to collect some of the prisoners, about 200 rebels came so suddenly on the steamer that we were obliged to whistle to keep them off till the gun could be got ready.

"It was now 10.30 P.M., and the night was not very clear. At this moment the most tremendous firing and cheering was heard from Chunye, and hurried our progress to that place. Just before we reached it a gunboat disarranged the rudder, and then we were dodging about from side to side for some ten minutes, the firing and cheering going on as before. At last we got up to the junction of the creek, and steaming through the Imperial, and other boats, we came on the scene of action. The gunboats were drawn up in line, and were firing as fast as they could. The stone fort at the village was sparkling with musketry, and at times astounding yells burst forth from it. The *Hyson* blew her whistle, and was received with deafening cheers from the gunboats, which were on the eve of bolting. She steamed up the creek towards Quinsan, and at the distance of 200 yards we saw a confused mass near a high bridge. It was too dark to distinguish very clearly, but on the steamer blowing the whistle the mass wavered, yelled, and turned back. It was the garrison of Quinsan attempting to escape to Soochow, some seven or eight thousand men.

"Matters were in too critical a state to hesitate, as the mass of the rebels, goaded into desperation, would have swept our small force away. We were therefore forced to fire into them, and pursue them towards Quinsan, firing, however, very rarely, and only when the rebels looked as if

they would make a stand. The steamer went up to about a mile from Quinsan, and then returned. Several officers landed and took charge of the prisoners who were extended along the bank, and at 4 A.M., 31st May, everything was quiet. The *Hyson* had fired some eighty or ninety rounds during the day and night; and although humanity might have desired a smaller destruction, it was indispensably necessary to inflict such a blow on the garrison of Soochow as would cause them not to risk another such engagement, and thus enable us to live in peace during the summer—which it indeed did, for the rebels never came on this road again. Their loss must have been from three to four thousand killed, drowned, and prisoners. We took 800, most of whom entered our ranks. They lost all their arms and a very large number of boats. At 5 A.M. on 31st May the troops at Chunye and the *Hyson* moved towards Quinsan, and found the remainder of the force who had been left at the east gate already in the city. The possession of Quinsan was of immense importance in a strategical point of view. The circumference of its walls is some five miles, but they are very inferior. Its ditch is over forty yards wide, and from the nature of the creeks around it would prove very difficult to take. The high hill enclosed within its walls would enable the slightest move to be seen, and if two or three guns were placed on the spurs of this hill it would form a very formidable citadel. The rebels did not know its importance till they lost it."

Such was the capture of Quinsan, told in the simple words of its captor. It confirmed the reputation gained by the fall of Taitsan, and proved that the new commander was a man of extraordinary military intuition as well as energy. There is scarcely room to doubt that if Gordon had attacked Quinsan where the Chinese commander wished him to do, at its very strongest point, he would have met with a rude repulse. By attacking them on the side of Soochow, and by threatening their communication with that place, he terrified the large garrison so much that in the end they evacuated the place without resistance. Gordon himself believed that if the mandarins at the head of the Imperial army would have consented to support him in immediate measures for an assault on Soochow, that city would have fallen in the panic that ensued after the loss of Quinsan. The opportunity being lost, it will be seen that many months of arduous fighting followed before the same result was achieved.

The reasons which rendered a change in the headquarters of the force desirable have already been mentioned, and Major Gordon at once decided to remove them to Quinsan, a strong and advantageously-placed position embarrassing to the Taepings, and equally encouraging to the Imperialists. But if this removal was necessary on grounds of

discipline and policy, it was very unpopular with the men themselves, who were attached to Sungkiang, where they could easily dispose of their plunder. They determined to make an effort to get the offensive order withdrawn, and a proclamation was drawn up by the most disaffected, who were the non-commissioned officers, and sent to Major Gordon with an intimation that the artillery would blow all the officers to pieces unless their demands were complied with. Major Gordon at once sent for all the non-commissioned officers, who paraded before him. When he demanded the name of the writer of the proclamation they were silent. At this Major Gordon announced that unless the name was given up, he would shoot one out of every five of them. At this statement the men groaned, when Gordon, noticing the man who groaned loudest, and shrewdly conceiving him to be a ring-leader, seized him with his own hands, dragged him from the ranks, and ordered two of his bodyguard to shoot the man on the spot. The order was at once carried out, and then Gordon, turning to the rest, gave them one hour to reflect whether they would obey orders, or compel him to shoot one in every five. Within this time they gave way, and discipline was restored. Gordon in his official despatch expressed regret for the man's death, but, as he truly said, "it saved many others which must have been lost if a stop had not been put to the independent way of the men." But the matter did not quite end here, for more than 2000 men deserted, but Gordon found no difficulty in filling their places from his prisoners and the villages round Quinsan. It is worthy of note that his own bodyguard was mainly composed of Taeping prisoners, and some of the most faithful of them had been the bearers of the Snake banners of the rebel Wangs.

Having thus settled the differences within his own force, and having fully established his own authority, Major Gordon would have prosecuted the attack on Soochow with vigour, if other difficulties had not occurred which occupied his time and attention. In the first place, there was a serious quarrel with General Ching, who was sore because he had not gained the credit for the capture of Quinsan, and who did everything he could to hamper and humiliate the force. At last he went to the length of firing on a column of Gordon's force, and as he refused all satisfaction, that officer was on the point of marching to attack him, when Dr—now Sir Halliday—Macartney arrived in his camp, being sent in a fully accredited manner, and escorted by the Futai's bodyguard, as a peace messenger from Li Hung Chang. On this occasion Sir Halliday Macartney first gave evidence of the exceptional diplomatic tact which he has since evinced in so many important

negotiations, when China derived much advantage from his energy, ability, and devotion to her cause. The storm then blew over, but the second affair was more serious. Li Hung Chang became remiss in his payment of the force, and on 25th July Gordon sent in his formal resignation. There is every reason to believe that at this moment Gordon was thoroughly sick of his command, and would willingly have returned to Europe. The difficulties with his own men, the want of co-operation, to say nothing of appreciation on the part of the Chinese authorities, had damped even his zeal in what he reiterated was the good cause of restoring peace and security to a suffering people; and in addition to these troubles he had to carry on a correspondence with anonymous writers, who made many baseless charges in the Shanghai and Hongkong papers of cruelty against the men under his command. The English General at Shanghai used all his influence, however, with the Chinese Governor to pay up the arrears, and with Gordon to retain the command, because, as he said, there was "no other officer who combined so many dashing qualities, let alone skill and judgment."

But the event that really decided Gordon to withdraw his resignation was the unexpected return of Burgevine. That adventurer had proceeded to Peking after his dismissal from the command, and obtained some support from the American minister in pressing his claims on the Chinese. He had been sent back to Shanghai with letters which, although they left some loophole of escape, might be interpreted as ordering Li Hung Chang to reinstate him in the command. This Li, supported by the English commanding officer at Shanghai, had resolutely refused to do, and the feud between the men became more bitter than ever. Burgevine remained in Shanghai and employed his time in selling the Taepings arms and ammunition. In this way he established secret relations with their chiefs, and seeing no chance of Imperial employment he was not unwilling to join his fortunes to theirs. This inclination was increased by the belief that he might be able to form a force of his own which would give a decisive turn to the struggle, and his vanity led him to think that he might pose on the rebel side as no unequal adversary of Gordon, to whom all the time he professed the greatest friendship. These feelings arose from or were certainly strengthened by the representations made by several of the officers and men whom Gordon had dismissed from his army. They easily led Burgevine to think that he was not forgotten, and that he had only to raise his standard to be joined by many of his old men.

A fortnight before Gordon's resignation Dr Macartney—who had

some time before begun his remarkable career in the Chinese service, and of whom Gordon himself said: "He drilled troops, supervised the manufacture of shells, gave advice, brightened the Futai's intellect about foreigners, and made peace, in which last accomplishment his *forte* lay" —wrote to him, stating that he had positive information that Burgevine was enlisting men for some enterprise, that he had already enrolled 300, and that he had even chosen a special flag for his force. A few days later Burgevine, probably hearing of this communication, wrote to Gordon, begging him not to believe any rumours about him, and stating that he was coming up to see him. Gordon unfortunately believed in this statement, and as he wished to exhibit special lenience towards the man whom he had displaced in the command, he went bail for him, so that he retained his personal liberty when the Chinese arrested Burgevine's agent Beechy, and wished to arrest Burgevine himself. On 2nd August Burgevine threw off the mask. At the head of a band of thirty-two rowdies, he seized the new steamer *Kajow* at Sungkiang, and with that vessel hastened to join the Taepings. The very day that this happened Gordon reached Shanghai for the purpose of resigning his command, but on the receipt of this intelligence he at once withdrew his resignation and hastened back to Quinsan. Apart from public considerations, he felt doubly bound to do this because Burgevine had not been arrested on his pledged word.

The position was undoubtedly critical, for the prospect of plunder offered by Burgevine was very attractive to mercenaries like the Ever Victorious Army, and there was a very real risk that the force at Quinsan, deprived of its commander, might be induced to desert *en masse* under the persuasive promises of Burgevine. When Gordon reached Quinsan he was so apprehensive as to what might occur that he removed his heavy artillery and most of his munitions of war to Taitsan, where General Brown, in command at Shanghai, undertook to see that they were protected. The situation at Quinsan was full of peril, for although Burgevine had thrown away a chance, by taking a roundabout instead of a direct route to Soochow, of striking a decisive blow before Gordon could get back, the Taeping leader, Mow Wang, had not been so negligent, and his operations for the recovery of several places taken by Gordon in the last few days of his command were on the point of success, when that officer's return arrested the course of his plans. It must be pointed out that after this date the Taepings fought with far more skill than before. They had a very considerable European contingent, probably nearly 300 men, and these served not only as leaders, but as trainers of the rebel Chinese forces. They had also obtained some good cannon,

and the steamer *Kajow* proved of material value on water. Gordon found on his return, therefore, that the difficulties of the campaign were materially increased. His opponents were far stronger and more confident, while his own resources remained unchanged. Gordon tersely summed up the situation in an official despatch: "There is no knowing what an immense amount of damage might have been done if the rebels had had a more energetic man than Burgevine, and it would be as well not to point out the line which might have been taken."

The first engagements of this more difficult and keenly-contested phase of the campaign took place at Kahpoo, a place on the canal some miles south of Soochow. Gordon had taken it a week before he left for Shanghai, as a sort of parting gift to the Chinese, but when he arrived there on 9th August he found the garrison hard pressed, although the *Hyson* was stationed there—and indeed nothing but his arrival with a third steamer, the *Cricket*, averted its recapture. After five days' operations, that do not require description, the neighbourhood of Kahpoo was cleared of rebels, and Gordon returned to Quinsan, where the most essential task had to be accomplished of restoring the discipline of his own force. As some assistance in this difficult task General Brown lent him the services of 200 Beluches, whose admirable conduct and splendid appearance went far to restore a healthy spirit among his own men. At the same time these troops ensured the safety of Quinsan and also of Gordon himself, at least against the treachery of Burgevine's sympathisers.

The season of the year, the hottest and most trying of the long Chinese summer, compelled inaction, and Gordon felt doubly the need of caution now that he was brought face to face with the most arduous undertaking of the whole war, viz. the siege and capture of Soochow. General Ching's headquarters were at Ta Edin, and he had also occupied in force Waiquaidong, only two miles from the eastern gate of Soochow. Before the end of September he had pushed on still further, and erected his stockades within half a mile of that position. At this moment Gordon, anxious as to what might happen to his too-adventurous colleague, advanced with his force to his aid, and took up the supreme direction of the attack on Soochow. As usual, Gordon began by making a careful examination of the extensive rebel positions at and round Soochow, and the result of it was that he decided to capture the stockades and village of Patachiaou, one mile distant from the south wall of that city. His plan met with easy success, for the Taepings were not expecting an attack in that quarter, and offered little resistance.

Easily as they had been driven out of it, the Taepings made a very

determined effort to retake it a few days later, and it was only by desperate exertions that Gordon succeeded in holding what he had won. This was the first occasion on which Burgevine and the *Kajow* steamer, commanded by Captain Jones, "a daring and capable officer," to use Gordon's words, came into action. The rebels were extremely confident for this reason, and also because they had some heavy artillery. Gordon had to keep to his stockades, and to send the *Hyson* out of action from fear of its being damaged by the enemy's shell, but the Taepings were afraid to come to close quarters, and eventually retreated before a well-timed *sortie*. In this engagement Gordon had the co-operation of a French-trained Chinese regiment, under the command of a gallant officer, Captain Bonnefoy. After this there was a lull, but Gordon felt too weak to attempt anything serious against Soochow, and he deprecated all operations until he could strike an effective blow. In this respect he differed materially from his Chinese colleague, General Ching, who was most restless and enterprising, but his ill-directed energy produced no result, and even assisted the enemy's plans.

At this juncture the Taeping hero Chung Wang arrived from Nanking with reinforcements, and imparted a new vigour to the defence. But whether on account of jealousy, or of disappointment at the poor services he had rendered, it also resulted in the dismissal of Burgevine, an incident of which some brief account may be given before following the main course of the campaign. More than one ground of dispute led up to this conclusion. In the first place, Burgevine was disappointed at finding several of the rebel Wangs as clever and ambitious as he was, and they were disappointed at the amount of service and help he could give them. This feeling culminated in angry scenes, when, on being sent into Shanghai in disguise to purchase arms with a large sum of money, he returned to Soochow without either money or weapons. He was apparently given, as a last chance, the opportunity of regaining his reputation by entrapping Gordon into the rebel power, and he thoroughly entered into the scheme, although he failed to carry it out. On 3rd October—that is to say, two days after the failure to retake Patachiaou —Burgevine made the first step in this plot by addressing a letter to Gordon, thanking him for the offer of medicines he had sent, and offering to meet him whenever he liked to discuss matters. On the 6th he met Gordon at the stockades, and declared his willingness to abandon the Taepings and come over with all his force, including the *Kajow*. He and his companions were guaranteed their lives, and the arrangement seemed complete. Two days later he had a second interview with the English officer, when he made the extraordinary proposition that

he and Gordon should join bands, attack both Taepings and Imperialists, and fight for their own hand. This mad and unprincipled proposal excited Gordon's anger, but it was only Burgevine's old filibustering idea revived under unfavourable conditions. It was while smarting under this rebuff that Burgevine proposed to Captain Jones a fresh plot for entrapping Gordon, while he, unsuspecting evil, was engaged in conferences for their surrender; but to Jones's credit, let it be stated that he refused to have any part in such black treachery. Thereupon Burgevine attempted to take Jones's life, either to conceal his own treachery or to enable him to carry out his interrupted plans. Much delay occurred in carrying out the project of Burgevine's desertion, and Gordon, rendered specially anxious to save his and the other foreigners' lives, because one party had escaped without Burgevine, wrote a strong letter on the subject to Mow Wang, Chung Wang's chief lieutenant. He also sent him a present of a pony, at which the rebel chief was so much pleased that he agreed to release Burgevine, and on 18th October that person appeared at the outworks of Gordon's position. His personal safety was entirely due to Gordon's humane efforts, and to the impression that officer had made on the Taepings as a chivalrous opponent. The American Consul at Shanghai, Mr Seward, officially thanked Major Gordon for his "great kindness to misguided General Burgevine and his men." Nearly two years later this adventurer met the fate he so narrowly escaped on several occasions. He had been forbidden by his own Consul as well as the Chinese Government ever to return to China, but in June 1865 he broke his parole. Before he could be arrested he met with his death by accident, being drowned when crossing a Chinese river, but rumours were prevalent that his death was an act of vengeance instigated by his old enemy the Futai, Li Hung Chang.

The assumption of the supreme command by Chung Wang was soon followed by those offensive operations which had made that dashing leader the most famous of all the rebel generals. Gordon and the bulk of his corps were at Patachiaou, south of Soochow—only General Ching and the Chinese army were north of that place—and he resolved to attack them and force his way through to Chanzu, which he wished to recover as opening a road to the river and the outer world. Gordon divined his intention, and for some time prevented him carrying it out by making threatening demonstrations with his gunboats on the western side of Soochow; but his own attention was soon diverted to another part of the country where a new and unexpected danger threatened his own position and communications. A large rebel force, computed to number 20,000 men, had suddenly appeared behind Major Gordon's

position and attacked the Imperial garrison stationed at Wokong, a place on the canal twelve or thirteen miles south of Soochow. The news that reached Gordon on 12th October from this quarter was that the garrison, having been repulsed in a *sortie* with a loss of several hundred men, could not hold out many hours. Gordon at once hastened to the rescue at the head of one of his regiments, and with the invaluable *Hyson* steamer. He found his allies quite cowed, afraid even to open the gates of their stockades to admit him and his men, and the enemy drawn up in imposing lines at a distance of about 1500 yards. He at once ordered the attack, and during three hours the engagement was contested in the most obstinate and spirited manner. The rebels, having their line of retreat secure, fought bravely. Gordon had to bring up his heavy guns to within forty yards of the wall before they would gave way, and even then they stood at the second and third inner stockades. Gordon never gave them a chance of recovering, but having got them on the run, kept them at it for a distance of ten miles. This was one of Gordon's greatest victories in the open field. The Taepings never fought better, yet with 1000 good Chinese troops Gordon routed more than 20,000 of them.

Chung Wang had begun his march towards Chanzu, but after some slight successes met with a rude repulse at Monding, where he also lost the steamer *Kajow*, which was sunk by an accidental explosion. He then established his headquarters at Wusieh, a place on the Grand Canal, about twenty-five miles north of Soochow. Here he hoped to effect some diversion that might relieve the increasing pressure on Soochow itself.

In the meantime that pressure had greatly increased, owing to the bolder measures to which Gordon resorted after the European contingent abandoned the Taeping side. His first step was to attack and capture the stockades at Wuliungchow, a village two miles west of Patachiaou, which commanded a passage leading from the Taiho Lake to the south gate of Soochow. Gordon managed to conceal the real object of his attack from the Taepings, and to capture the stockades with little loss. The wet weather and the unexpected nature of the attack explained this easy success, for the stockades were strong and well placed. Chung Wang returned from Wusieh with the special object of retaking them, but he was repulsed with some loss, and then hurried back to that place. A few days later part of Gordon's force, under Major Kirkham, was sent to Wokong, which was again being threatened by the Taepings, and obtained a brilliant success, capturing 1300 prisoners and not fewer than 1600 boats, including sixteen gunboats.

Having achieved this success on the south, Gordon proceeded with his plans to secure an equally advantageous position on the north side. He left two regiments at Wuliungchow, which he greatly strengthened, and with the remainder he went to Waiquaidong, where he proposed to deliver his attack on the Leeku stockades, only a short distance in front of the north gate of Soochow. This operation was carried out with complete success, and it was promptly followed up by the capture of the rebel positions at Wanti, which enabled the forces round Soochow to join hands with the other considerable Imperial army that had been placed in the field by the energy of Li Hung Chang, and entrusted to the command of his brother, San Tajin. This last force was opposed to Chung Wang, but although numerically the stronger, the want of the most rudimentary military knowledge in its commander reduced this army of 20,000 men to inglorious inaction. At this stage of the struggle it will be well to sum up in Gordon's own words the different positions held by the contending forces:—

"We held the Taiho Lake with the steamers the *Hyson*, the *Tsatlee*, *Firefly*, and 200 men (Imperialists), which cruised off Moodow, and prevented supplies coming to Soochow up the creek which leads from that village to the small West Gate, or Shih-mün, of Soochow, and where they had many actions with the rebel gunboats. The next great water outlet was closed to the rebels by our possession with 1000 men (Imperialists) of Wuliungchow. Off the Pon-mün, or South Gate, the next main water and road communication to the south was closed to them by our occupation by 1500 men (Imperialists) of the Patachiaou stockades on the Grand Canal, south of the south-east angle of Soochow. The next, which led from the east gate of Soochow to Quinsan, was closed by Ching's force of 3000 or 4000 men, nearly two miles from the gate. These men were well posted in strong and well-constructed stockades. The next position held was Leeku, where I had one regiment, and at Wanti there was another regiment. The total force in the stockades was about 8500 men, leaving for field operation 2500 Imperialists, 2100 of the Quinsan Corps, and 400 Franco-Chinese. San Tajin had 20,000 to 30,000, in three separate camps. He was utterly incapable for command of any sort.

"The rebels held Soochow with some 40,000 men in and around the city. The city of Wusieh held some 20,000 men, and Chung Wang had at Mahtanchow some 18,000 more. Chung Wang's position was central between Wusieh and Soochow, some ten miles in advance of the Grand Canal, so as to be able to give help to either city, and to attack on the flank any advance made by us on their grand line of communications by that canal."

The city of Soochow, now so closely beleaguered, was of imposing appearance. An English traveller who saw it at this time thus describes it:—

"Further than the eye could penetrate in the misty morning stretched the grizzled walls of Soochow, a city celebrated for ages in the history of China for its size, population, wealth, and luxury, but now stripped of its magnificence, and held by an army of Taeping banditti against the Imperial forces. To the right and left, mile after mile, rose the line of lofty wall and grey turret, while above all appeared not only the graceful pagodas, which have been for ages the boast of Soochow and the dense foliage of secular trees—the invariable glory of Chinese cities—but also the shimmering roofs of newly decorated palaces confidently occupied by the vainglorious leaders of the rebellion. The proximity of the rebel line became apparent with surprising suddenness, for, following their usual custom, they greeted the rising sun with a simultaneous display of gaudy banners above the line of their entrenchments. The mud walls they had thrown up in advance, scarcely distinguishable before, were now marked out by thousands of flags of every colour from black to crimson, whilst behind them rose the jangling roll of gongs, and the murmurs of an invisible multitude."

Had Gordon been free to act, or even if he had possessed authority over the two Chinese commanders, his plan of campaign would have been simple and decisive. He would have effected a junction of his forces with San Tajin; and having overwhelmed Chung Wang and his 18,000 men with his combined army of double that strength, he would have appeared at the head of his victorious troops before the bewildered garrison of Wusieh. He would probably have thus terminated the campaign at a stroke. Even the decisive defeat of Chung Wang alone might have entailed the collapse of the cause now tottering to its fall. But Major Gordon had to consider not merely the military quality of his allies, but also their jealousies and differences. General Ching hated San Tajin on private as well as on public grounds. He desired a monopoly of the profit and honour of the campaign. His own reputation would be made by the capture of Soochow. It would be diminished and cast into the shade were another Imperial commander to defeat Chung Wang and close the line of the Grand Canal. If Gordon detached himself from General Ching, he could not feel sure what folly that jealous and impulsive commander might not commit. He would certainly not pursue the vigilant defence before Soochow necessary to guard the extensive line of stockades, and to prevent its large garrison sallying out and assailing his own rear. Gordon had consequently for

these considerations to abandon the tempting idea of crushing Chung Wang and capturing the towns in the rear of Nanking, and to have recourse to safer if slower methods.

But if he had to abandon the larger plan, he still stuck tenaciously to his main idea that the way to capture Soochow was to isolate it, and above all to sever Chung Wang's communication with it. Several weeks passed before Gordon could complete the necessary arrangements, but at last, on 19th November, he left Leeku at the head of the greater part of his own force and a large contingent of Ching's braves to attack the stockades at Fusaiquan on the Grand Canal, about four miles north of Leeku. The Taeping position was a strong one, including eight separate earthworks, a stone fort, and several stockades. Gordon said "it was far the best built and strongest position he had yet seen," but the rebels evacuated it in the most cowardly manner without attempting the least resistance. Gordon goes on to say: "Our loss was none killed, and none wounded! We had expected a most desperate defence. If ever men deserved beheading, the Taeping leaders did on this occasion." The immediate consequence of this success was that Chung Wang quitted his camp in face of San Tajin, and, joining the Wusieh corps, concentrated his whole force for the defence of the Grand Canal.

Having thus strengthened his position towards the north, Gordon, very much to Ching's satisfaction, fell in with his views to begin a direct attack on Soochow itself. For good reasons it was decided that the north-east angle of Soochow was the weakest, but before it could be attacked it was necessary to capture the strong stockades which the rebels had erected in front of the East and North Gates. The East Gate, or Low Mun, stockades were selected for the first attack, and as the scene of a reverse to Ching's force on 14th October, the Chinese commander was specially anxious to capture them. They were exceedingly formidable, consisting of a line of breastwork, defended at intervals with circular stockades, and the position was well chosen and strongly fortified. After reconnoitring it, and obtaining all the information he could from deserters, Gordon determined on a night attack; but unfortunately not only were his plans revealed to the Taepings by traitors in his own camp, but his arrangements miscarried. As is often the case with night attacks, the plan of attack was not adhered to, and much confusion followed. The breastwork was carried by a small part of his troops, but the stockades in its rear were never reached. Encouraged by Gordon's example, who seemed to be at every point at the same moment, his men held on to the breastwork, but the supports would not move up, and when he hastened to the rear to encourage them, the Taepings under Mow Wang attacked in their turn and

manned the breastwork. There was nothing now to be done but to draw off the troops, which was executed with comparatively slight loss; but 165 officers and men were killed or wounded—the majority being killed or missing. This loss would have been much greater if the Taepings had only had the courage to leave their position, but fortunately they showed themselves unable to follow up their success. This was Gordon's first defeat, but it was so obviously due to special causes that it did not much dishearten his men, or diminish the high reputation he and his force had gained by thirteen previous victories.

But the necessity to retrieve such a reverse was obvious, and Gordon collected the whole of his corps for the purpose of capturing the Low Mun stockades. He also placed his siege guns in position, and began a heavy bombardment in the morning of 29th November as the preliminary to attack. On his side, Mow Wang made all his preparations for defence, which had been rendered the more necessary because there were dissensions among the Taeping leaders themselves, one of whom, named Lar Wang, had offered to surrender with his followers to General Ching on terms. Partly on this account Chung Wang rode into Soochow with a bodyguard of a few hundred men by the only bridle-path available, and his presence composed for the moment the quarrels of the Taeping leaders. But the result depended on the successful defence of the stockades in front of the East Gate, and Gordon was equally intent on capturing them. After a short bombardment the breastwork seemed so knocked about that Gordon ordered a column to advance to the assault, but it was met by a tremendous fire and compelled to turn back. Then the bombardment was renewed, and the field-pieces were pushed forward as far as possible. A second assault was then delivered, but the creek—fourteen yards across—was too wide for the bridge, and things again looked black, when the officers boldly jumped into the water, and their men following, the whole position was captured at a rush. Once this success was gained, the defence of the Taepings, who had fought well, collapsed, and stockade after stockade was carried with little or no loss. Gordon himself, with a mere handful of men, captured three more stockades and a stone fort that he said could have held out after all the other positions had fallen. The loss of the corps in this severe but decisive engagement was heavy, amounting to 6 officers killed, and 3 wounded; 50 men killed, and 128 wounded, besides 5 Europeans of the Bodyguard. But this assault was decisive, inasmuch as it was the last that had to be made on the defences of Soochow before the fall of that place.

At this point it will be appropriate to say something about Gordon's relations with his own officers, many of whom contemplated, whenever

dissatisfied with their treatment or at prolonged inaction, selling their cause and services to the Taepings. During the siege he discovered that Captain Perry had written a letter giving the enemy information, but Gordon agreed to look over the offence on the condition that Perry led the next forlorn hope, which happened to be the affair at the Leeku stockades. Gordon had forgotten the condition, but Perry remembered it, and led the assault. He was shot in the mouth, and fell into the arms of his commander, ever at the point of danger. Perry was the first man killed, and Gordon's epitaph was that he was "a very good officer." Although Gordon was a strict and even severe disciplinarian, he was always solicitous of the interests of the officers who worked under him, and he set apart the greater portion of his pay in the Chinese service, which had been fixed at £1,200 a year, for their benefit, more especially for the purchase of medicine and comforts for the ill or wounded. There was no exaggeration at all in the statement that he left China without any savings and as poor as when he reached it.

From the gallant deeds of Gordon and his corps the course of the siege passes to the intrigues and negotiations between General Ching and Lar Wang. These had made so much progress that Lar Wang's troops abandoned the formidable stockades in front of the North Gate, which were occupied without the least attempt at resistance. Several interviews took place with the Taeping leaders, and Gordon was present at some of these, but Li Hung Chang asserts that he was not present at the most important of them; and that he was not a signatory of the convention of surrender. He was strongly in favour of good terms being granted to the rebels, and impressed his views on both Li Hung Chang, who had come up to the camp to be present at the fall of Soochow, and General Ching. From both he received the most positive assurances that the lives of all the Wangs would be spared, and such was no doubt their intention, but events were too strong for them. The most interesting of these leaders, with, of course, the exception of Chung Wang, was Mow Wang, who would have nothing to say to a surrender, and wished to fight to the death. He was the man who had sent back Burgevine, and Gordon admired his courage so much that he resolved to spare no effort to save his life. He asked Li to assign Mow Wang to him, and this request was granted. Unfortunately all these efforts were thrown away, for on the 4th December, during a banquet given at Mow Wang's palace, the other Wangs had fallen upon and murdered that chief, who would have resisted with all his force their projected surrender of the place. The next day Lar Wang, who had taken an oath of brotherhood with General

Ching, gave up one of the gates, and his numerous followers undertook to shave their heads in token of surrender. The Imperialist troops occupied the gate, and prepared to take possession of the city, but Gordon would not allow any of his men to leave the stockades as he foresaw the impossibility of preventing them from plundering if they were permitted to advance into the city. But he went and represented the case to Li Hung Chang, and demanded two months' pay for his men as a reward for their good service, and as some compensation for the loss of loot. Li replied that he could not grant the request, and Gordon at once resigned for the second time during his connection with the Chinese Government. There was serious risk of an outbreak on the part of the discontented soldiers of the Ever Victorious Army, but on General Ching providing one month's pay Gordon used his influence with his men to march quietly back to Quinsan. The men at first received this order with shouts of dissatisfaction, and even threatened to attack the Futai Li, but Gordon succeeded in overcoming their objections, and the worst that happened was a noisy demonstration as the troops passed Li Hung Chang's tent, where Gordon and another officer stood on guard.

The Chinese officials were delighted to thus get rid of the Ever Victorious Army, without which they would never have seen the inside of Soochow. Its presence diminished their credit and interfered with the execution of the plans which they had no doubt held throughout all the negotiations with Lar Wang. Neither Li nor Ching wished Lar Wang and his colleagues to be saved, and thus allowed to become rivals to themselves in the race of official honour and wealth. There was nothing surprising in this, and the only matter for astonishment is that Lar Wang, well acquainted with the Punic faith of his countrymen, and with such a black record from the Government point of view, should have so easily placed faith in the word of his enemies. This was the more extraordinary because Gordon himself went into the city and saw Lar Wang at his own house before he left for Li Hung Chang's quarters, where a banquet had been arranged, and asked him very pressingly whether he was quite satisfied. Gordon himself seems to have had suspicions or apprehensions, for he even offered to take him on board his own steamer with which he was going to cruise in the Taiho Lake. Lar Wang, however, was quite confident, and said that all was well. This confidence was doubly unfortunate, for Gordon had excused himself from the Futai's banquet on the ground that his presence might seem humiliating to the Taeping leaders, whereas it was the only thing that could have averted their fate. As Gordon was leaving the city the Wangs passed him, laughing and talking, and riding apparently unarmed

to the Futai's quarters. The next time Gordon saw them was when he beheld their headless bodies lying on the river bank near their host's camp.

Gordon after this walked through the city, as some hours would elapse before the steamer could get round to the south-west side, where he intended to embark. While on his way he was joined by Dr Macartney. They both proceeded to the walls near the Eastern Gate, and on looking towards the Futai's quarters Gordon noticed a large crowd, but he did not attach any significance to it. About half an hour later a large number of Imperial soldiers entered the city, and set up a yell, as was their custom, and fired off guns. Gordon represented to their officers that this conduct was against the agreement, and might lead to disturbance, as the city was still crowded with Taepings. At this juncture General Ching appeared. As Gordon was supposed to be on his steamer on his way to the lake, he seemed taken aback, and turned pale. To Gordon's repeated inquiries as to whether all was well, he made a rambling statement that Lar Wang had made unreasonable demands, that he had refused to carry out the exact terms of the surrender, and finally, that he had run away. Gordon then asked Dr Macartney, as he knew Chinese, to go to Lar Wang's house, and reassure him if he found him there, but this statement must be taken in conjunction with the important narrative I give two pages further on. Gordon went a little way with General Ching, and then decided to wait at the North Gate for further intelligence, while the Chinese commander continued his round. Gordon then began to question his own interpreter as to what he thought, and on receiving the reply that "there was something improper," he determined to proceed himself with all speed to Lar Wang's house. On his way he passed through crowds of excited Taeping soldiers, and he also met a band of Imperialists laden with plunder. Lar Wang's palace had been pillaged and gutted, but an uncle of his, named Wangchi, was there, and he begged Gordon to help him to escort the females of Lar Wang's family to his own house. Gordon agreed to do this, but when he reached Wangchi's house, he found five or six hundred armed men in the courtyard. The doors were closed, and Wangchi refused to allow either Gordon or his interpreter to leave. During the night large bodies of excited Taepings, who knew that their chiefs had been entrapped, although, fortunately, not aware of their murder, rallied on this spot, and Gordon was thus placed in a position of the greatest personal peril.

At length leave was given him to send his interpreter, escorted by two Taepings, to summon his own bodyguard, and to take an order

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to another part of his force to seize the Futai and hold him as a hostage for the safety of the Wangs. The interpreter was attacked on the way by Imperialists, who wounded him, and tore up Gordon's letters. When one of the Taeping guides brought back this news Gordon was allowed to leave himself for the same purpose; but he was arrested on the way by some Imperialists, detained for several hours, and the morning was far advanced before he was able to send back his bodyguard for the protection of Wangchi's house and family. He then moved a further force into the city, to prevent the massacre that the Imperialists seemed to be contemplating, and in this task he was gallantly seconded by Captain Bonnefoy and the Franco-Chinese contingent. Having taken these steps, Gordon waited near the Eastern Gate for all his steamers, with which he intended to seize the Futai, and make him give up the Wangs. At this moment General Ching approached him, but before he could begin his excuses, "he met with such a storm that he made a precipitate retreat into the city." Ching then sent an English officer, one of Gordon's own force, to explain matters, but he did not know whether the chiefs were alive or dead. He went on to say, however, that Lar Wang's son was in his tent, and on the boy being sent for, he said that his father had been executed on the opposite side of the creek. The steamers had still not arrived, and Gordon asked one of his lieutenants, Prince F. von Wittgenstein, to cross the creek in his boat and report what he saw. He returned with the intelligence that there were nine headless bodies. Gordon then crossed himself, and identified Lar Wang and several of his companions. There was consequently no further doubt as to what had happened, or anything left for Gordon to do than to secure them decent burial. Having done this he abandoned his trip to the Taiho Lake, and hastened to Quinsan.

The exact mode of this assassination seems to have been as follows: When the Wangs came out of the city they were met by General Ching, who did not, however, accompany them to the Futai Li Hung Chang. That official received them in a stockade near his boat, some conversation ensued, and then Li left the stockade. Here again reference should be made to the authoritative narrative that follows. A party of Imperial troops closed the gates, seized the Wangs, and at once beheaded them. Li Hung Chang very soon afterwards left his quarters for a different and remote part of the Imperial camp.

This treacherous act, although quite in accordance with Chinese traditions, was generally denounced at the time, and has excited much discussion since. Major Gordon certainly felt it very keenly, for he considered that his word had been pledged as much as the Chinese

commander's for the safety of the leaders who surrendered. It has been shown how energetically he acted once he suspected that anything was wrong, but it seems as if it were going too far to say that he thought for a moment of exacting a summary revenge on the person of Li Hung Chang. Sir Henry Gordon, writing with at least a sense of responsibility, says on this point: "It is not the fact that Major Gordon sought the Futai with the intention of shooting him. It is a complete misrepresentation to say he did so. It is true he endeavoured unsuccessfully to have an explanation with him, but not of the nature asserted." But it must also be reaffirmed that as long as Gordon thought he could save the Wangs' lives he was prepared to secure the person of Li Hung Chang and hold him as a hostage for their safety. Of that, at least, there can be no question.

I must now ask the reader to return to the point when Gordon and Dr Macartney were standing on the wall near the Low Mun Gate, in order that the following important and authoritative narrative may be understood. General Ching entered by this gate at the head of a party of his troops, and Gordon, somewhat uneasy at the signs of commotion he thought he had detected across the creek, at once addressed him, asking—"Well, how did it go off? Have the Wangs seen the Futai?"

Taken off his guard, or confused between the sudden question and his own knowledge of what had occurred, Ching quickly replied, "They have not seen the Futai."

"What!" replied Gordon, equally hastily; "that must be nonsense. I saw the Wangs myself ride out of the city to the rendezvous, and spoke to them."

Ching then corrected himself by saying, "Oh, yes, that is all right, but they have not shaved their heads, and they want to retain half the city," the western half, that nearest to the relieving force, still at a considerable distance from Soochow, under the heroic Chung Wang.

To which Gordon at once responded, "That won't do. They must conform with what has been agreed upon," and turning to Macartney, he said, "Will you go to the Lar Wang's palace and tell him that this cannot be, and meet me afterwards at Wuliungchow, where I am to join the steamer *Hyson* to go on the Taiho Lake?"

Macartney at once accepted the mission, and proceeded to the Lar Wang's palace, but before following him thither it is necessary to refer to two earlier passages, one known and the other up to this moment unknown, in the relations of General Gordon and Sir Halliday Macartney.

The passage which is known is that where Macartney, sent as the

representative of the Futâi Li Hung Chang, and escorted by that Governor's own bodyguard, healed the breach caused between Gordon and General Ching by the latter firing on some of Gordon's troops and treating the matter with marked levity, which so enraged Gordon that he was on the point of attacking the Imperialist troops when Sir Halliday Macartney arrived as peacemaker, and with equal tact and energy averted the catastrophe. This incident has already been referred to, and need not further detain us. I come now to the second and more interesting matter.

Some weeks before the fall of Soochow, but at a moment when it had become clear that the place could not hold out much longer, Gordon approached Macartney and said: "I want to speak to you very privately, and as I do not wish any one to hear our conversation, will you come on board my boat?" When they were both on board, Gordon ordered his Chinese sailors to pull out to the centre of the lake before he would say a word. Having thus rendered secrecy assured, Gordon spoke as follows:—

"Macartney, I have brought you out here so that nobody should know of our conversation, and that we might speak out as man to man. I must tell you, in the first place, that as soon as Soochow falls I intend to resign the command and return home. With that intention in my mind, I have been anxiously considering who was the best man to name as my successor in the command of the Ever Victorious Army, and, after the most careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that you are the best man. Will you take the command?"

This unexpected question was the more embarrassing to Macartney, because, long before Gordon was appointed, rumour had freely credited him with coveting the command of the Ever Victorious Army in succession to Burgevine, and, as a matter of fact, the Chinese authorities had wished him to have the command. However, nothing had come of the project, and Macartney, after his post as Burgevine's military secretary had ceased to exist with the dismissal and treason of that adventurer, was appointed to a separate command of a portion of the Imperialist forces. The course of events had now, in an unexpected but highly complimentary manner, brought the realisation of any hopes he may have entertained on the subject within his reach. He replied to Gordon as follows:—

"As you speak so frankly to me, I will speak equally frankly to you, and tell you something I have never told a living person. Rumour has credited me with having aspired to the command of this force, but erroneously so. My ambition was to work myself up at Court, and only to take the command if forced on me as a provisional matter, and

as a stepping-stone to my real object, which was, when my knowledge of the language was perfected, to acquire at Peking some such influence as that possessed by Verbiest and the other French missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I should never have mentioned this to you lest you should not have believed it, but now that the command is at my feet I may make this avowal without any hesitation as to your accepting it. As you really think I can best succeed to the command of the force when you resign it, I am perfectly willing to accept the task."

To which Gordon replied: "Very well, then. That is settled." With this private understanding, as to which nothing has been published until this moment, the conversation closed with a final injunction from Gordon of profound secrecy, as, should it become known, he might be unable to get certain of his more ambitious officers to take part in capturing the city. When Gordon therefore turned to Macartney, and asked him to proceed to the Lar Wang's palace and inform him that the terms of the convention must be carried out, it is necessary in order to throw light on what follows to state what their relations were at that moment. Gordon had selected Macartney as his successor in preference to all his own officers.

Macartney hastened to the Lar Wang's palace, but as he had lent Gordon his horse, his movements were slightly retarded. On reaching the building he noticed some signs of confusion, and when he asked one of the attendants to take him at once to his master, he received the reply that the Lar Wang was out. Sir Halliday Macartney is not a man to be lightly turned from his purpose, and to this vague response he spoke in peremptory terms:

"The matter is of the first importance. I *must* see the Lar Wang. Take me to him."

Then the servant of the Taeping leader did a strange thing.

"You *cannot* see my master," he said, and turning his face to the wall, so that no one else might see, he drew his open hand in a cutting position backwards and forwards. This is the recognised Chinese mode of showing that a man's head has been cut off.

Being thus apprised that something tragic had happened, Macartney hastened away to Wuliungchow to keep his appointment with Gordon, and to acquaint him with what had taken place at the Lar Wang's palace. But no Gordon came, and more than a day elapsed before Macartney and he met again under dramatic circumstances at Quinsan. After waiting at Wuliungchow some hours, Sir Halliday resolved to proceed to the Futai's camp, and learn there what had happened. But on arriving he was informed that the Futai was not in the camp, that no

one knew where he was, and that Gordon was in a state of furious wrath at the massacre of the Wangs, which was no longer concealed. Macartney then endeavoured to find Gordon, but did not succeed, which is explained by the fact that Gordon was then hastening to Quinsan to collect his own troops. Baffled in these attempts, Macartney returned, after a great many hours, to his own camp near the Paotichiaou Bridge, there to await events, and on his arrival there he at last found the Futai Li who had come to him for security. Li put into his hands a letter, saying, "I have received that letter from Gordon. Translate its contents."

After perusing it, Macartney said: "This letter is written in a fit of indignation. You and Gordon are and have been friends, and I am also the friend of you both. The most friendly act I can do both of you is to decline to translate it. Let me therefore return you the letter unread."

"Very well," replied Li; "do as you think best, but as I am not to know the contents, I do not wish to have the letter. Please keep it."

Sir Halliday Macartney kept the letter, which remained in his possession for some time, until, in fact, he handed it, with an explanatory account of the whole affair, to Sir Harry Parkes, as will be explained further on.

After this point had been settled, Li Hung Chang went on to say that he wished Macartney to go and see Gordon at Quinsan, and speak to him as follows:—

"Tell Gordon that he is in no way, direct or indirect, responsible in this matter, and that, if he considers his honour involved, I will sign any proclamation he likes to draft, and publish it far and wide that he had no part in or knowledge of it. I accept myself the full and sole responsibility for what has been done. But also tell Gordon that this is China, not Europe. I wished to save the lives of the Wangs, and at first thought that I could do so, but they came with their heads unshaved, they used defiant language, and proposed a deviation from the convention, and I saw that it would not be safe to show mercy to these rebels. Therefore what was done was inevitable. But Gordon had no part in it, and whatever he demands to clear himself shall be done."

I do not gather that Sir Halliday Macartney had any serious misgivings about this mission when he undertook it. His relations with Gordon were, as has been shown, of a specially cordial and confidential character, and even if he failed to induce Gordon to abandon the threatening plans he had described in his letter to Li Hung Chang, which was in his pocket, there was no reason to appre-

hend any personal unpleasantness with one who had given the clearest proof of friendship and esteem. As I cannot give the full text of the original letter from General Gordon, I content myself by stating that its two principal passages were that Li Hung Chang should at once resign his post of Governor of Kiangsu, and give up the seals of office to Gordon, so that he might put them in commission until the Emperor's pleasure should be ascertained; or that, failing that step, Gordon would forthwith proceed to attack the Imperialists, and to retake from them all the places captured by the Ever Victorious Army, for the purpose of handing them back again to the Taepings. When Gordon went so far as to write a letter of that character, which, it must be admitted, was far in excess of any authority he possessed, it must be clear that the envoy, who came to put forward counsels that were intended to restore harmony, but that by so doing might assume the aspect of palliating the Futai's conduct, could not count on a very cordial reception from a man of Gordon's temperament, whose sense of honour and good faith had been deeply injured by the murder of the rebel leaders.

Still, Sir Halliday accepted the mission without hesitation; and hastened to carry it out without delay. It was late in the day when he saw Li Hung Chang, but having procured a native boat with several rowers, he set off in the evening, and reached Quinsan in the middle of the night. Gordon was then in bed and could not be disturbed, and while Macartney waited he drank some coffee Gordon's servant made for him, which he much needed, as he had left Soochow without having broken his fast during the whole day. After a short time, and before day had really broken, Gordon sent down word that he would see him, and Macartney went upstairs to an ill-lighted room, where he found Gordon sitting on his bedstead. He found Gordon sobbing, and before a word was exchanged, Gordon stooped down, and taking something from under the bedstead, held it up in the air, exclaiming:

"Do you see that? Do you see that?"

The light through the small Chinese windows was so faint that Macartney had at first some difficulty in recognising what it was, when Gordon again exclaimed:

"It is the head of the Lar Wang, foully murdered!" and with that burst into hysterical tears.

At once perceiving that any conversation under these circumstances would do no good, Macartney said he would retire and see Gordon later. Some hours afterwards breakfast was served in a large room downstairs, where there were present not only many of the officers, but also several European merchants and traders of Shanghai, who had been

in the habit of supplying the force with its commissariat requirements. Gordon came in, and Macartney took a seat beside him. After a few minutes' silence Gordon turned to Macartney, and said abruptly:

"You have not come for yourself. You have come on a mission from the Futai. What is it?"

When Macartney suggested that so public a place might not be the most suitable, Gordon said: "There are only friends here. I have no secrets. Speak out."

There was no longer any honourable way of avoiding the challenge, and Macartney described exactly what has been already recorded as to Li Hung Chang having come to him with Gordon's letter, which from friendly motives he had declined to translate, and stating that Li took the whole responsibility on himself, and would exonerate Gordon from the least complicity in the affair, with which the Chinese statesman averred Gordon had had nothing to do. He went on to urge with regard to the measures threatened by Gordon in expiation of the massacre that they were not justifiable, and would not in the end redound to Gordon's own credit. In conclusion, he said he felt sure that "a little reflection would show Gordon that to carry on a personal war with the Futai would be to undo all the good that had been done. Moreover, you must recollect that although you, no doubt, have at this moment the military force to carry out your threats, it will no longer be paid by the Chinese authorities. You will only be able to keep your men at your back by allowing them to plunder, and how long will that prove successful, and what credit will you get by it?"

Gordon here stamped his foot, saying he would have none of Macartney's mild counsels. To which Macartney replied, "Mild or not, they are the only ones your Minister at Peking and our Queen will approve. Nay, what I advise you to do is even that you would yourself do if you would but reflect, and not let yourself be influenced by those men sitting at your table."

To these undoubtedly prudent representations, supported as they were by at least one of those present, Mr Henry Dent, who got up and said that, in his opinion, Dr Macartney's advice ought to be followed, while the others who wished the war to go on from interested motives remained silent, Gordon did and would not listen. The hot fit of rage and horror at the treacherous murder of the Wangs, kept at fever-point by the terrible memorial in his possession, was still strong upon him, and his angry retort was—"I will have none of your tame counsels," and there and then ordered the *Hyson*, with a party of infantry, to be got ready to attack the Futai, at the same time offering Macartney a passage in the steamer.

On hearing this decisive declaration Macartney left the table, and hastening to one of Gordon's officers, who was a personal friend, he begged the loan of a horse and a pair of spurs. Having obtained what he wanted, he set off riding as hard as he could by the road, which was somewhat shorter than the canal, so that he might warn Li Hung Chang as to what was going to happen, and also bring up his own troops to oppose the advance of Gordon, who actually did move out of Quinsan with the intention of carrying out his threats, but returned there when his flotilla had proceeded half way.

By that time he had fortunately reflected on the situation, and a sanguinary struggle was averted. Gordon came to see that his honour was not in the slightest or most remote degree involved, and that China was not a country to which the laws of chivalry could be applied; but before he had reached this stage of mental equilibrium he had penned a most regrettable and cruelly unjust despatch, not about Li Hung Chang or any one involved in the massacre, but about Dr, now Sir Halliday Macartney, whose sole fault had been that he wished to make peace, and to advise Gordon to act in the very sense which he afterwards himself adopted.

In a despatch to General Brown, commanding at Shanghai, which appears in the Blue Book (China, No. 3, 1864, p. 198), Gordon wrote: "I then went to his (Li's) boat and left him a note in English, informing him of what my intention had been, and also my opinion of his treachery. I regret to say that Mr Macartney did not think fit to have this translated to him. . . . On 8th December the Futai sent Mr Macartney to persuade me that he could not have done otherwise, and I blush to think that he could have got an Englishman, late an officer in Her Majesty's army, to undertake a mission of such a nature." This statement, appearing in an official publication, has been largely quoted, especially in Mr Egmont Hake's "Story of Chinese Gordon," and the original injury done by Gordon, for which at the time he atoned, was thus repeated in an offensive and altogether unjustifiable form twenty years after Gordon had stated publicly that he was sorry for having written this passage, and believed that Sir Halliday Macartney was actuated by just as noble sentiments as himself.

It is not an agreeable task for any biographer to record that his hero was in the wrong, but as General Gordon frankly and fully admitted that in this matter he was altogether to blame, and as Mr Hake's error shows that his retractation never obtained that publicity which he himself desired, I conceive myself to be carrying out his wishes in placing the following facts prominently before the reader.

When the Blue Book was published with the despatch referred to,

Dr Macartney took no notice of it. Some time afterwards he met the late Sir Harry Parkes, then Consul-General at Shanghai, and he described what I have set forth in the same language. Sir Harry Parkes, than whom England never had a finer representative in the Far East, at once said: "This is very interesting. Sir Frederick Bruce is coming down shortly. I wish you would write out what you have told me, so that I might show it to him." Dr Macartney wrote out his narrative, and with it he sent Gordon's original letter to Li Hung Chang. Those documents have never been published, but they should still exist in the Shanghai Consulate. Sir Frederick Bruce's (brother of the ambassador Lord Elgin, and himself the First British Minister at Peking) comment after perusing them was: "Dr Macartney showed very great judgment and good sense, and no blame attaches to him in this matter."

A considerable period intervened between the breakfast scene at Quinsan and Gordon's next meeting with Macartney. In that period much had happened. Gordon had forgiven Li Hung Chang, done everything that Macartney had recommended as the right course in the memorable scene at Quinsan, and by some of the most remarkable of his military exploits had crushed the Taeping rebellion, but the two principal actors in this affair had not crossed each other's path.

Six weeks after Gordon brought his operations in the field to an end at Chanchufu in May he returned to Soochow, and Li Hung Chang, wishing to do him honour, asked him to an official breakfast at his yamen. At the same time Li Hung Chang said to Macartney: "I have asked Gordon to breakfast. I know you and he have had some difference. How would you meet him if you came too?"

To this question Macartney replied: "I would meet Gordon exactly as Gordon met me. It is true that Gordon did me an injustice, but I am quite ready to blot it out from my memory if Gordon will admit it. Gordon acted under a strong feeling of excitement when he was not master of himself, and I have no more thought of holding him strictly responsible for what he wrote at such a moment than I would a madman."

Li Hung Chang said: "Very well, then. I ask you to come to breakfast to meet him." On Macartney's return to his house he found a letter from Gordon waiting for him. In this letter Gordon admitted that he had done him a wrong, and was prepared to sign any paper to that effect that Macartney might prepare.

Macartney thereupon replied to Gordon, pointing out that the mere publication of a letter of retractation was not an adequate reparation for an injurious statement which had been given a wide circulation, and to a certain extent placed beyond recall by appearing in an official publi-

cation, but that if he might publish Gordon's own letter offering to do this in the *North China Herald*, he would be satisfied, and the matter, as far as he was concerned, might be considered at an end. To this course Gordon at once acquiesced, subject to the omission of one paragraph affecting a third person, and in no respect relating to Sir Halliday or his conduct. This letter, which the Editor of that paper stated he "published at Colonel Gordon's request," on 23rd July 1864, read as follows :—

"SHANGHAI, *July* 5, 1864.

"MY DEAR MACARTNEY,—It is with much regret that I perceive in the last Blue Book issued on China affairs a Report from me to General Brown on the occurrences at Soochow, which report contains an injurious remark on your conduct.

"I am extremely sorry that I ever penned that remark, as I believe you went out of your way on this occasion wholly on the same public grounds which led eventually to my taking the field myself, and I can only excuse my having done so by recollecting the angry feelings with which I was actuated at that time.

"It will be my duty to rectify this error in other quarters, and in the meantime I beg you to make what use you may think fit of this letter.—Yours truly, C. G. GORDON."

On the next day Gordon and Macartney met at breakfast at the yamen of the Futai Li Hung Chang, and Gordon at once came up to Macartney and said :

"Do not let us talk of the past, but of the future. I am one of those who hold that when a man has wronged another he should seek opportunities through his life of making him redress. Now you are founding an Arsenal at Soochow, and I am going back to England, where I have a brother in the Arsenal at Woolwich. From him I can get you books, plans, and useful information. I will do so."

Gordon was as good as his word. He sent Macartney expensive plans and books, besides most valuable information. He also promised to write to the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief, admitting that he was not justified in his criticism of Dr Macartney, who had acted in every way becoming an English gentleman and officer. Thus ended the misunderstanding between the two Englishmen who rendered China the best service she has ever obtained from foreigners; and knowing both these distinguished men intimately, I have much pleasure in testifying from my own knowledge to the accuracy of the following statement of Sir Halliday Macartney to myself that "after this, Gordon and I remained firm friends evermore."

Gordon's indignation at this outrage did not soon subside, and three weeks after it happened an opportunity presented itself for showing and perhaps relieving his mind. A high Chinese officer presented himself at

his quarters at Quinsan to announce the receipt of an Imperial decree and presents from Peking as a reward for his share in the capture of Soochow. Gordon at once said that he would not accept the presents, and that they were not to be brought to him. The Chinese officer replied that they should not be brought, but that the emissary of the Emperor ought to be received. To this Gordon assented, and on 1st January 1864 he went down to receive him at the West Gate. On arriving there he met a procession carrying a number of open boxes, containing 10,000 taels (then about £3000 of our money) in Sycee shoes, laid on red cloth, also four Snake flags taken from the Taepings—two sent by Li Hung Chang, and two by another mandarin who had had no part in the Soochow affair. Gordon made the procession turn about and take the whole lot back again. He wrote his reply stating his reason on the back of the Imperial rescript itself; he rejected Li Hung Chang's flags, but he accepted the other two as being in no sense associated with the disgrace of the Taeping massacre. In this manner did Gordon show the Chinese what he thought of their conduct. His characteristic reply to the Imperial rescript read as follows:—

"Major Gordon receives the approbation of His Majesty the Emperor with every gratification, but regrets most sincerely that, owing to the circumstance which occurred since the capture of Soochow, he is unable to receive any mark of H.M. the Emperor's recognition, and therefore respectfully begs His Majesty to receive his thanks for his intended kindness, and to allow him to decline the same."

At this moment it will be recollected that Gordon was, strictly speaking, no longer in command. He had resigned, because his very reasonable demand for a gratuity to his troops had not been complied with. But circumstances were too strong for him, and a number of considerations, all highly creditable to his judgment and single-mindedness, induced him to sink his private grievances, and to resume the command on grounds of public policy and safety. The internal condition of the Ever Victorious Army itself, which inaction had brought to the verge of mutiny, was the determining fact that induced Gordon to resume the command, even at the price of meeting Li Hung Chang and sinking his differences with him. There had been much intrigue among the officers of the force as to who should succeed Gordon in the command, if he persisted in his resolve to give it up, and before tranquillity was restored sixteen of the agitating officers had to be dismissed. The force itself welcomed the formal resumption of the command by Gordon, and not the less because it signified a return to active operations after more than two months' inaction. The murder of the Wangs took place on 7th December 1863; it was on 18th February

1864 that Gordon marched out of Quinsan at the head of the bulk of his force.

In a letter written at the time, Sir Robert Hart, whose services to the Chinese Government, spread over the long period of forty years, have been of the highest order and importance, said:—

"The destiny of China is at the present moment in the hands of Gordon more than of any other man, and if he be encouraged to act vigorously, the knotty question of Taepingdom *versus* 'union in the cause of law and order' will be solved before the end of May, and quiet will at length be restored to this unfortunate and sorely-tried country. Personally, Gordon's wish is to leave the force as soon as he can. Now that Soochow has fallen, there is nothing more that he can do, whether to add to his own reputation or to retrieve that of British officers generally, tarnished by Holland's defeat at Taitsan. He has little or nothing personally to gain from future successes, and as he has himself to lead in all critical moments, and is constantly exposed to danger, he has before him the not very improbable contingency of being hit sooner or later. But he lays aside his personal feelings, and seeing well that if he were now to leave the force it would in all probability go at once to the rebels or cause some other disaster, he consents to remain with it for a time."

During that interval some minor successes had been obtained by the Imperialists. Several towns surrendered to Li Hung Chang, and Chung Wang evacuated Wusieh and retired to Chanchufu, also on the Grand Canal. At the same time he hastened himself to Nanking, in the vain hope of arousing Tien Wang to the gravity of the situation, and inducing him to make some special effort to turn the fortune of the war. General Ching succeeded in capturing Pingwang, and with it another entrance into the Taiho Lake. San Tajin moved his camp close up to Changchufu and engaged the Taepings in almost daily encounters, during one of which the *Firefly* steamer was retaken, and its English captain killed. In consequence of this all the Europeans left the service of the Taepings, and as their fleet had been almost entirely destroyed, they were now hemmed in within a small compass, and Gordon himself estimated that they ought to be finally overcome within two months. In this hope he resumed the command, and his decision was officially approved of and confirmed by the British Minister at Peking.

The Taepings still retained possession of Hangchow and some other towns in the province of Chekiang, but all communication between them and Nanking had been severed by the fall of Soochow, so far at least as the routes east of the Taiho Lake were concerned. West of that lake they

still held Yesing and Liyang, which enabled them to maintain communication, although by a roundabout route. Gordon determined to begin his campaign by attacking these two places, when the severance would be complete.

Yesing, on the north-west corner of the lake, was the first object of attack. Liyang is about fifty miles further inland than that town. The Taepings at Yesing were not dreaming of an attack when Gordon, at the head of his force, suddenly appeared before its walls. He found the surrounding villages in a most appalling state of distress, the inhabitants living on human food. The town was well surrounded by ditches and stockades, and Gordon felt compelled to reconnoitre it most carefully before deciding on his plan of attack. While engaged in this work his ardour carried him away, and he was nearly captured by the enemy. It was one of the narrowest of his many escapes during the war, and went far to justify the reputation he had gained of having a charmed life. A very striking instance of his narrowly escaping a premature end had occurred during the siege of Soochow itself, when the marvellous fifty-three-arch bridge at Patachiaou was destroyed. One evening Gordon was seated smoking a cigar on one of the damaged parapets of the bridge, when two shots fired by his own men struck the stone-work close by him. He got down at the second shot, and entered his boat. Hardly had he done so when the bridge collapsed with a tremendous crash, nearly smashing his boat and killing two men. In all the engagements, except when confined to his boat, Gordon always led the attack, carrying no weapons, except a revolver which he wore concealed in his breast, and never used except once, against one of his own mutineers, but only a little rattan cane, which his men called his magic wand of Victory. A graphic picture was drawn by one of his own officers of this unarmed leader in the breach of an assaulted position urging on his men by catching them by the sleeve of their coats, and by standing indifferent and unresisting in the midst of the thickest fire. Gordon long afterwards admitted that during the whole of these scenes he was continuously praying to the Almighty that his men should not turn tail. In the varied and voluminous annals of war there is no more striking figure than this of human heroism combined with spiritual fervour.

The attack on Yesing lasted several days, as, owing to the manner in which the country was cut up by canals, all the operations had to be conducted with great caution. The capture of the southern stockades was followed after a day's interval by the evacuation of the latter and the flight of the garrison, who however pillaged the town as far as they could before leaving. Gordon would not let his men enter the town, as he knew they would pillage, and thus get out of hand. They were so

disappointed that several cases of insubordination occurred, and one mutineer had to be shot. The Imperialists were left to garrison Yesing, but under strict injunctions that they were on no account to take life; and under the threats of Li Hung Chang, who did not wish a repetition of the Soochow affair, these were strictly obeyed. All these arrangements having been made, Gordon resumed his march towards Liyang on 4th March, the infantry proceeding overland, and the artillery in the boats and *Hyson* steamer.

At Liyang the rebels had collected a large force, and made every preparation for a vigorous defence. But Gordon was quite confident of success, although he was now operating in the heart of a hostile country, and at a distance from his base. The sound flotilla which mounted formidable artillery, and which co-operated with him on the creek that led to the walls of Liyang, gave him sound reasons for confidence, and additional ground of security in the event of any accident. But his military skill and careful arrangements were not subjected to any severe test, as a mutiny broke out among the Taepings themselves, and the half in favour of surrender got possession of the city, and closed the gates on those of their comrades who wished to hold out. Major Gordon promptly accepted their surrender, and guaranteed their personal safety to all, thus obtaining a signal success without any loss. This was the more satisfactory because Liyang was found to be an admirable position for defence, strongly fortified with numerous stockades, well supplied with provisions for several months' siege, and garrisoned by 15,000 well-armed and well-clothed rebels. These men were disarmed, and allowed to go where they liked after they had shaved their heads in token of surrender. The provisions they had stored up for their own use were distributed among the starving peasants of the surrounding country. Gordon himself saved the lives of the female relatives of the Taeping Wang, who had wished to hold out, not however, it should in fairness be stated, from the official Chinese, but from the Taepings who had surrendered. After the capitulation was over, Gordon took 1000 of the Taepings into his own force, and he also engaged the services of another 1500 as a new contingent, to fight under their own officers. In this unusual manner he nearly doubled the effective strength of his own corps, and then advanced north to attack the town of Kintang, rather more than forty miles north of Liyang. At this point Gordon experienced his first serious rebuff at the hands of Fortune, for the earlier reverse at the Soochow stockades was so clearly due to a miscarriage in the attack, and so ephemeral in its issue, that it can scarcely be counted.

Unlike the other Taeping towns, all of which were stockaded posi-

tions, Kintang had no outer defences. It presented the appearance of a small compact city with a stone wall. No flags were shown; the place might have been deserted, but the complete silence seemed ominous. Gordon selected his point of attack, and began a bombardment, which continued during three hours, and then he ordered the assault. As the bugles sounded the advance, the Taepings appeared for the first time on the walls, and received the assailants with a heavy fire. At this critical moment Gordon received a severe wound below the knee, and had to be carried to his boat. His place was taken by Major Brown, brother of the General commanding at Shanghai, who advanced waving Gordon's own flag, but he too received a severe wound, and was carried off the field. The rebels fought with great desperation, and Gordon, who remained conscious, sent orders from his boat for the discontinuance of the attack. The loss was heavy—two officers killed, eleven wounded, and 115 rank and file killed and wounded. Gordon, notwithstanding his wound, would have renewed the attack, but for the receipt of alarming intelligence from his rear. Li Hung Chang wrote that the Taepings had turned the flank of his brother's army, and captured Fushan. They were at that moment besieging Chanzu, and had carried terror into the very heart of the Imperial position. Gordon's wound—the only one of any severity he ever received—excited much sympathy among the Chinese, and was made the subject of an Imperial edict ordering Li Hung Chang to call on him daily, and "requesting Gordon to wait until he shall be perfectly restored to health and strength."

In the extremity to which he was reduced, the brilliant idea had occurred to Chung Wang to assume the offensive at a point most remote from the scene where Gordon was acting in person. Hence the sudden and successful attack on Fushan, and his strategy was rewarded by the paralysis it produced in the Imperial plans. Gordon at once hastened back to Liyang, where he left a strong garrison, and taking only 1000 men, half of whom were the irregular Taeping contingent raised at Liyang itself, proceeded by forced marches to Wusieh. As the late Sir George Chesney well said, it is impossible to decide whether the temerity or the confidence of the young wounded commander was the more calculated to excite wonder. On arriving here, he found that nothing worse had happened than what had been already reported, while in the south, beyond his sphere of operations, the important city of Hangchow had been evacuated by the Taepings; and with this loss another avenue for obtaining arms and ammunition was closed to them.

The relief of Kongyin, which was hard pressed, was the first task Gordon set himself; and as he could not leave his boat on account

of his wound, the conduct of operations was attended with much difficulty. After obtaining several minor successes, and approaching to within a few miles of Kongyin, Gordon found it necessary to completely alter his plans, and to attack the Taepings in their headquarters at Waisso, before relieving the former place. He accordingly proceeded to Waisso with his artillery on board the flotilla, and his infantry marching by land. The latter, carried away by some trifling successes, attacked the Waisso stockades without his orders, and even without his knowledge; and having invited a reverse by their rashness and disobedience, rendered it complete by an inexcusable panic, during which the Taeping cavalry, not more than 100 strong, rode through the best regiment of the force; the rebels, carrying a sword in each hand, cut down the fugitives right and left. The pursuit lasted for three miles, and 7 European officers killed, 1 wounded, 252 men killed, and 62 wounded, represented the heavy loss in this disastrous affair. The survivors, many of whom had thrown away their arms, were so panic-stricken that Gordon had to retire, and to summon up fresh troops.

For this disaster Gordon held the officers, and not the men, to be blameworthy. They led the men into a false position, and then did not make the proper movements. If the men had only formed square, Gordon wrote, it would have been all right with them. After this Gordon waited to allow of his wound being thoroughly cured, and on 6th April he again appeared before Waisso. A large Imperial force also enveloped the place on all sides but one, which had been left apparently open and unguarded in the hope that the garrison would use it as a means of reaching a place of safety. The Imperialists had, however, broken all the bridges along this route, so that the Taepings would soon encounter serious difficulties to their progress, and admit of their being taken at a great disadvantage. Gordon approached the place with much caution, and he found it so strongly fortified on the south side, opposite his line of approach, that he moved round to the north in search of a more favourable point of attack. This simple manœuvre so disconcerted the Taepings that they abandoned several of their stockades, which Gordon promptly seized; and finding that these in turn commanded others, he succeeded in carrying the whole of a most formidable position with little or no loss. The Taeping garrison fled in confusion and suffered heavily at the hands of the Imperial troops. It rallied on the camp before Kongyin, and the day after this success Gordon marched from Waisso to attack them. The Taepings were thoroughly disorganised, and apparently amazed at the number of their opponents, for the whole of the population rose against them in revenge for the outrages they had perpetrated. There was only one action, and

that of an insignificant description, when the whole Taeping force before Kongyin broke into a rout. The Imperialist plan for retarding their retreat succeeded to admiration, and of more than 10,000 men not a tenth escaped from the sword of their pursuers.

In a letter written at this time to his mother, Gordon, who, at the end of February had been raised to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the army for distinguished conduct in the field, gave a graphic account of the condition of the region in which he was operating:—

"The rebels are very much pressed, and three months should finish them. During the pursuit from Kongyin the Imperialists and villagers killed in one village 3000. I will say this much—the Imperialists did not kill the coolies and boys. The villagers followed up and stripped the fugitives stark naked, so that all over the country there were naked men lying down in the grass. The cruelties these rebels had committed during their raid were frightful; in every village there were from ten to sixty dead, either women—frightfully mutilated—old men, or small children. I do not regret the fate of these rebels. I have no talent for description, but the scenes I have witnessed of misery are something dreadful, and I must say that your wish for me to return with the work incomplete would not be expressed if you saw the state of these poor people. The horrible furtive looks of the wretched inhabitants hovering around one's boat haunts me, and the knowledge of their want of nourishment would sicken anyone. They are like wolves. The dead lie where they fall, and are in some cases trodden quite flat by the passers-by. I hope to get the Shanghai people to assist, but they do not *see* these things, and to *read* that there are human beings eating human flesh produces less effect than if they saw the corpses from which that flesh is cut. There is one thing I promise you, and that is, that as soon as I can leave this service, I will do so; but I will not be led to do what may cause great disasters for the sake of getting out of the dangers, which, in my opinion, are no greater in action than in barracks. My leg is all right; the eleventh day after I received the wound I was up, and by the fifteenth day I could walk well. The ball went through the thick part of the leg, just below the knee."

Having thus cleared the district due north of Wusieh, Gordon proceeded against the main Taeping position at Chanchufu, north-west of that place, and on the Grand Canal. Here Chung Wang had fortified thirty stockades, and commanded in person. On inspecting it, Gordon found it so strong that he summoned up his troops from Liyang, and it was not until 22nd April, ten days after Waisso, that he had collected all his force of 4000 men for the attack. On the very day he accomplished this the Imperialists alone attacked some stockades outside the

West Gate, and carried them by a heavy and unnecessary loss of life. Their defenders, instead of retreating into Chanchufu, fled northwards to their next possession, at Tayan. The same night part of the garrison left behind made a *sortie*, but Gordon was apprised of it, and it was easily repulsed. The next day he captured all the stockades on the southern, or, more correctly, the western side of the Canal, but the Taepings still held a strong stone fort on the opposite side, which defied all the efforts of the Imperialists. Two hundred of the Liyang corps gallantly crossed the Canal in boats, forced open the back door of the fort, and carried it at a rush. With this success all the outworks of Chanchufu were taken, and the town itself closely besieged. Gordon then proceeded to plant his batteries opposite the point he had selected for attack, but a regrettable affair happened in the night, when the picket on guard fired into the party working at the battery, and killed Colonel Tapp, an excellent officer who commanded the artillery of the force. This mishap was quickly followed by others. The Imperialists under their own generals wished to get all the credit of the capture, and attacked several times on their own side, but always without obtaining any advantage. Nor was Gordon himself more fortunate. After a severe bombardment, to which the Taepings made no reply, Gordon assaulted on 27th April. His men succeeded in throwing two pontoons across the ditch, twenty yards wide, and some of his officers reached the wall; but the Taepings met them boldly with a terrific storm of fire-balls, bags of powder, stinkpots, and even showers of bricks. Twice did Gordon lead his men to the assault, but he had to admit his repulse with the loss of his pontoons, and a great number of his best officers and men. Ten officers killed and 19 wounded, 40 men killed and 260 wounded, represented the cost of this disastrous failure.

Undaunted by this defeat, Gordon proceeded to lay siege in regular form, and Li Hung Chang lent him the services of his own troops in order to dig the necessary trenches. Working only at night, and with equal celerity and secrecy, a succession of trenches were made right up to the edge of the ditch. At the same time, proclamations in large characters were exhibited, offering terms to all who came over, except the Wang in command; and many desertions took place. At last, on 11th May, the place was again assaulted, this time at mid-day; and owing to the short distance from the advance trench to the breach, the Chinese troops of all kinds were able to come to close fighting with the Taepings without any preliminary loss. The Taepings fought with great courage, even although their chief Hoo Wang was taken prisoner early in the fight, but at last they were overwhelmed by numbers. Hoo Wang and all the Canton and Kwangsi men—that is to say, the original Taeping

band—were executed, and the completeness of the triumph was demonstrated by the surrender, two days later, of Tayan, the last of the Taeping possessions on the Grand Canal. On the spur of the moment, two hours after the successful assault, Gordon wrote a hurried few lines to his mother, stating, to relieve her anxiety, that he would "not again take the field," and that he was happy to say he had "got off safe."

The capture of Chanchufu was the last achievement of the Ever Victorious Army, which marched back to Quinsan, its headquarters, in preparation for its disbandment, which had been decided on by the joint conclusion of the Chinese and European authorities. It had done its work, and the Chinese naturally regarded the presence of this formidable and somewhat unruly force with no little apprehension. The Taepings were now confined to Nanking, and the Viceroy, Tseng Kwofan, felt confident that before long he would be able to capture that city. The British Government had decided that the service of Major Gordon under the Chinese should terminate on 1st June 1864, and some weeks before that order was put in force the army was quietly disbanded, without any disturbance or display. The troops themselves would have given their commander a demonstration, but he evaded them, and escaped quietly into Shanghai, passing without regret from the position of the arbiter of an Empire's destiny to the routine of an English officer's existence. At the same time a considerable part of his force was taken into the service of Li Hung Chang.

Gordon's own opinion of his work was given in the following letter:—

"I have the satisfaction of knowing that the end of this rebellion is at hand, while, had I continued inactive, it might have lingered on for years. I do not care a jot about my promotion or what people may say. I know I shall leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that, through my weak instrumentality, upwards of eighty to one hundred thousand lives have been spared. I want no further satisfaction than this."

Having retired from the active direction of the campaign, Gordon still retained sufficient interest in the work he had had in hand so long to incline him to accept an invitation to visit the lines of Tseng Kwofan before Nanking. On 26th June he visited that Viceroy's camp, and found that his position extended over from twenty-four to thirty miles, and that he commanded 80,000 troops, who were, however, badly armed. The troops were well fed, but ill paid, and at last confident of success. While Gordon was there, or only a few hours after he left, Tien Wang, the leader of the moribund Taeping cause, seeing no chance of escape, swallowed gold leaf in the approved regal fashion, and died. On the 19th July the Imperialists succeeded in running a gallery

under the wall of Nanking, and in charging it with 40,000 lbs. of powder. The explosion destroyed fifty yards of the wall, and the Imperialists at once stormed the breach. Chung Wang made a valiant defence in his own palace, and then cut his way out, at the head of 1000 men. Very few of these escaped, but Chung Wang and the young Tien Wang, son of the defunct leader, were among the fortunate few. Chung Wang was soon captured, and beheaded on 7th August, after being allowed a week's respite to write the history of the Taeping rebellion. At least it may be claimed for him that he was the only true hero of the rebel movement. Gordon's own estimation of this leader is given in these words:—

"He was the bravest, most talented, and enterprising leader the rebels had. He had been in more engagements than any other rebel leader, and could always be distinguished. His presence with the Taepings was equal to a reinforcement of 5000 men, and was always felt by the superior way in which the rebels resisted. He was the only rebel chief whose death was to be regretted; the others, his followers, were a ruthless set of bandit chiefs."

The young Tien Wang was eventually captured and executed. Thus terminated, in the blood of its authors and leaders, the great rebellion, which had inflicted an incalculable amount of misery and loss on the Chinese people in a vain attempt to subvert the existing dynasty. Six hundred cities were stated to have been destroyed during its course, and sixteen out of the eighteen provinces to have witnessed the ravages of civil war.

Having thus concluded his work as commander of the Ever Victorious Army, it might have been thought that Gordon would be allowed to carry out his own wish of returning home as quickly as possible, but the English, as well as the Chinese, authorities were desirous of organising a purely Chinese force, with the object of supplying the Government with the means of asserting its authority over any internal enemies. Sir Frederick Bruce came specially from Pekin to Shanghai on the subject, and Gordon undertook to give the necessary organisation his personal supervision until it was in fair working order. From the end of June until the middle of November Colonel Gordon was engaged in the Chinese camp, which was formed at a place near Sungkiang, drilling recruits, and endeavouring to inspire the officers with the military spirit. He describes his work in the following short note, which is also interesting as expressing his impressions about the Chinese people:—

"I have the manual, and platoon, and company drill in full swing, also part of the battalion drill, and one or two men know their

gun drill very fairly. This is so far satisfactory, and I think, if the whole country was not corrupt, they might go on well and quickly, but really it is most irritating to see the jealousies of the mandarins of one another. The people are first-rate, hard-working, and fairly honest; but it seems as soon as they rise in office they become corrupt. There is lots of vitality in the country, and there are some good men; but these are kept down by the leaden apathy of their equals, who hate to see reform, knowing their own deficiencies."

By the end of November Gordon was able to think of returning home, as he had given a start to military reform in China; but before he sailed he had to receive a congratulatory address from the most prominent citizens and merchants of Shanghai, expressing their "appreciation and admiration of his conduct." They had not always been so discriminating, and at the beginning their sympathies had been for the Taepings, or at least for strict non-intervention. The Chinese Government also gave exceptional signs of its gratitude to the noble-minded soldier, who had rendered it such invaluable aid. It again offered him a large sum of money, which was declined with as much firmness, although less emphasis, as on the earlier occasion. But he could not reject the promotion offered him to the high rank of Ti-Tu, or Field Marshal in the Chinese army, or churlishly refuse to receive the rare and high dignity of the Yellow Jacket. The English reader has been inclined on occasion to smile and sneer at that honour, but its origin was noble, and the very conditions on which it was based ensured that the holders should be very few in number.

The story of its origin will admit of being retold. When the Manchus conquered China, in the middle of the seventeenth century, they received material aid from a Chinese soldier named Wou Sankwei. He was rewarded with the Viceroyalty of the whole of south-western China, in which region he became supreme. After many years the Manchus thought he posed with too great an air of independence, and he was summoned to Peking to give an account of his stewardship. But Wou Sankwei was too old to be caught by so simple a ruse. He defied the Manchus, and established his authority throughout the larger part of the country south of the Great River. The young and afterwards illustrious Emperor Kanghi threw himself into the struggle with ardour, and it continued for many years, and devastated almost as large an area as did the Taeping rebellion. Kanghi did not obtain a decisive triumph until after the death of Wou Sankwei, when he bestowed a yellow riding jacket and an ornament of peacock's feathers for the cap on his principal lieutenants. He also decreed that this decoration should be made a regular order, to be conferred only on

generals who had led victorious armies against rebel forces. Gordon was thus perfectly qualified to receive the order founded by the famous Manchu contemporary of the Grand Monarque.

The Chinese Government also sent him six mandarin dresses in the correct fashion for a commanding officer of the rank of Ti-Tu, and a book explaining how they should be worn. Gordon said very little about it, his only comment being: "Some of the buttons on the mandarin hats are worth thirty or forty pounds. I am sorry for it, as they cannot afford it over well; it is, at any rate, very civil of them." The two Empress Regents also struck a heavy gold medal in his honour, the destination of which will be told hereafter, and Li Hung Chang did everything possible to demonstrate the respect and regard he entertained for his European colleague. That that was no transitory feeling was well shown thirty-two years later, when the famous Chinese statesman seized the occasion of his visit to London to place wreaths on the statue and cenotaph of his old comrade in arms. General Gordon valued the Yellow Jacket and the Gold Medal very highly. When he gave up the medal for the cause of charity he felt its loss keenly, and it became a phrase with him to signify the height of self-sacrifice to say, "You must give up your medal." Prince Kung, in a special and remarkable despatch to the British Minister, narrated in detail the achievements of Gordon, and declared in graceful language that "not only has he shown himself throughout both brave and energetic, but his thorough appreciation of that important question, a friendly understanding between China and foreign nations, is also deserving of the highest praise." The Minister was requested to bring these facts to the notice of the British Government, and it was even suggested by the Chinese Prince that some reward that Gordon would appreciate at the hands of his own Sovereign should be conferred on him, and would be hailed with satisfaction in China. If I add to this list the sword of Chung Wang, captured from one of his lieutenants, and presented afterwards by Gordon to the Duke of Cambridge, the rewards of Gordon from the Chinese are fully catalogued. At the hands of his own Government he received for his magnificent service a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy, and somewhat later the Companionship of the Bath.

Gordon had kept a journal, which he sent home; but subsequently, on finding that it was being circulated, he destroyed it. Of this fact there is no doubt, and it is of course impossible to say whether it contained more than the manuscript history of the Taeping war, which he lent me in 1881 as "a trustworthy narrative" for the purposes of my "History of China," and which was published many years later as a separate volume. The authorship of that history is a matter of

speculation, but there seems little or no doubt that it was at least compiled under Gordon's own direction, from the reports of his lieutenants in China, and completed during his residence at Gravesend.

Of the true personal journal Gordon wrote in 1864: "I do not want the same published, as I think, if my proceedings sink into oblivion, it would be better for every one; and my reason for this is that it is a very contested point whether we ought to have interfered or not, on which point I am perfectly satisfied that it was the proper and humane course to pursue, but I still do not expect people who do not know much about it to concur in the same. . . . I never want anything published. I am sure it does no good, and makes people chary of writing."

The same feeling came out in his last letter to his mother from China, 17th November 1864: "The individual is coming home, but does not wish it known, for it would be a signal for the disbanded to come to Southampton, and although the waits at Christmas are bad, these others are worse." Such a wish as this was impossible of gratification. The public press could not be silenced by the modesty of this retiring commander whose deeds had been so heroic and devoid of selfish purpose. The papers became so filled with accounts of his achievements that he gave up reading them, but *The Times* had at least crystallised the opinion of the day into a single sentence: "Never did soldier of fortune deport himself with a nicer sense of military honour, with more gallantry against the resisting, and with more mercy towards the vanquished, with more disinterested neglect of opportunities of personal advantage, or with more entire devotion to the objects and desires of his own Government, than this officer who, after all his victories, has just laid down his sword."

The more calmly and critically the deeds of the Ever Victorious Army and Gordon's conduct during the campaign against the Taepings are considered, the greater will be the credit awarded to the high-minded, brave, and unselfish man who then gained the sobriquet of "Chinese" Gordon. Among all the deeds of his varied and remarkable career he never succeeded in quite the same degree in winning fame and in commanding success. At Khartoum the eyes of the world were on him, but the Mahdi was allowed to remain victorious, and the Soudan still awaits fresh conquest. But during the two Taeping campaigns he was completely successful, and closed his work with an unqualified triumph. It was also the only occasion when he led an army in the field, and proved his claims to be considered a great commander. Of serious warfare it may be said to have been his last experience, for his own Government was very careful to give him no

active military employment—garrison, and even consular duties being deemed more suitable for this victorious leader than the conduct of any of those little expeditions commencing with the Red River and Ashanti for which he was pre-eminently qualified—and under the Khedive he controlled an army without finding a real foe. Gordon's title to rank among skilful military commanders rests on his conduct at the head of the Ever Victorious Army during the Taeping war. It has earned the praise of many competent military authorities as well as the general admiration of the public, and Lord Wolseley must have had it in his mind when, in vindicating his sanity, he exclaimed that he "wished other English generals had been bitten with his madness."

Those who have thought that Gordon won his victories in China by sheer personal gallantry, and nothing else, have taken a very shallow view of the case, and not condescended to study the details. In his general conception of the best way to overcome the Taepings he was necessarily hampered by the views, wishes, jealousies, and self-seeking purposes of his Chinese colleagues. But for them, his strategy would have been of a very different character, as he himself often said. He had to adjust his means to the best attainable end, and it must be allowed that he did this with remarkable tact and patience—the very qualities in which he was naturally most deficient. If we consider his strategy as being thus fettered by the Chinese officials Li Hung Chang and General Ching, whose first object was not so much the overthrow of the Taeping Government as the expulsion of the Taepings from the province for which they were responsible, it will be admitted that nothing could be better than his conception of what had to be done, and how it was to be effected. The campaign resolved itself into the cutting off of all their sources of supply from the sea and Treaty ports, and the shutting up of their principal force within the walls of Soochow. How well and successfully that was accomplished has been narrated, but a vainglorious commander could not have been held back after the fall of Chanchufu from leading his victorious force to achieve a crowning triumph at Nanking, which Gordon could easily have carried by assault before the order in council withdrawing his services came into effect.

More frequent opportunity was afforded for Gordon to reveal his tactical skill than his strategical insight, and in this respect the only trammels he experienced were from the military value and efficiency of his force, which had its own limitations. But still it would be unjust to form too poor an estimate of the fighting efficiency and courage of either Gordon's force or his Taeping opponents from the miserable exhibition the Chinese recently made of themselves during

the war with Japan. The heavy losses incurred, the several repulses Gordon himself experienced, would alone tell a different tale, if there were not the obstinate resistance offered to General Staveley and the French by the Taepings to show that they were not altogether contemptible adversaries. Gordon himself thought that his force could fight very well, and that his officers, if somewhat lacking in polish, were not to be surpassed in dash and devilry. For the Taepings, especially behind walls, and when it was impossible to out-manœuvre them, he had also the highest opinion, and his first object on every occasion was to discover a weak point in their position, and his patience and perspicuity were generally rewarded. The very first step he took on approaching any place that he had to attack was to reconnoitre it himself, either on foot or in one of his steamers, and he wrote a powerful despatch pointing out the general neglect of this precaution in the conduct of our Eastern campaigns, with its inevitable heavy attendant loss of precious lives. As he truly said, a careful reconnaissance generally revealed points of weakness in the enemy's position, and the Taepings, like all Asiatics, were easily demoralised when their line of retreat was threatened, or when attacked at some point where their preparations had not been perfected. Among his own personal qualifications, his untiring energy and his exceptional promptitude in coming to a decision were the most remarkable. No exertion relaxed his effort or diminished his ardour, and in face of fresh perils and disappointments he was always ready with a new plan, or prepared with some scheme for converting defeat into victory. One of his chief characteristics was his quickness in seeing an alternative course of action when his original plan had either failed or been thwarted by others. Of his personal courage and daring sufficient instances have been given to justify the assertion that in those qualities he was unsurpassable; and if he had never done anything else than lead the Ever Victorious Army, it would be sufficient to secure him a place among the most remarkable of English soldiers. In China he will be remembered for his rare self-abnegation, for his noble disdain of money, and for the spirit of tolerance with which he reconciled the incompatible parts of "a British officer and a Chinese mandarin."

CHAPTER VI.

GRAVESEND AND GALATZ.

AFTER the exciting and eventful ten years which began in the Crimea and ended in China, the most tranquil period in Gordon's career follows, until he was once again launched on the stormy sea of public affairs in Africa. He used to speak of the six years following his return from the Far East as the happiest of his life, and by a fortunate although unusual coincidence the details of his existence during the tranquil and uneventful period have been preserved with great amplitude and fidelity by several witnesses associated with him in his beneficent as well as his official work. It would be easy to fill a small volume with these particulars, which have been already given to the world, but here it will suffice to furnish a summary sufficient to bring out the philanthropic side of his character, and to explain how and why it came to be thought that Gordon was the man to solve that ever-pressing but ever-put-off problem of diminishing the pressure of excessive population and poverty in the eastern districts of London.

General Gordon arrived in England early in 1865, and proceeded to join his family at Rockstone Place, Southampton, where he was then doubly welcomed, as his father was in declining health, and died soon afterwards. Here Gordon passed a quiet six months, refusing all invitations with extreme modesty, and in every way baffling the attempts of relations, friends, and admirers to make a lion of him. He would not permit anyone to say that his suppression of the Taeping rebellion was a marvellous feat, and he evaded and resented all the attempts made by those in power to bring him into prominence as a national hero. Modesty is becoming as an abstract principle of human conduct, but Gordon carried it to an excess that made it difficult not so much for his fellow-men to understand him, as for them to hold ordinary workaday relations with him. This was due mainly to two causes—a habitual shyness, and his own perception that he could not restrain his tongue from uttering unpalatable and unconventional truths. He was so unworldly and self-sacrificing in his own actions that he could not let himself become even in a passive sense subservient to the very

worldly means by which all men more or less advance in public and private life. The desire of Ministers and War Office authorities to bring him forward, to eulogise his Chinese exploits, and in the end to give him worthy employment, was regarded by him as that secret favouritism that he abhorred. He retired into his shell at every effort made to bring him into prominence. He tore up his diary sooner than that it should be the means of giving him notoriety. He even refused special employment and promotion, because it would put him over the heads of his old comrades at the Woolwich Academy. The inevitable result followed. Those in power came to regard him as eccentric, and when occasions arose that would have provided him with congenial and much-desired employment on active service for his own country, his name was passed over, and the best soldier in England was left in inglorious and uncongenial inactivity. This was regrettable, but natural. The most heroic cannot pose as being too elevated above their fellows, or they will be left like Achilles sulking in his tent.

There were moments, we have been told, when in the bosom of the family circle he threw off the reserve in which he habitually wrapped himself, and narrated in stirring if simple language the course of his campaigns in China. These outbursts were few and far between. They became still less frequent when he found that the effect of his description was to increase the admiration his relatives never concealed from him. His mother, whose feelings towards him were of a specially tender nature, and whose solicitude for his personal safety had been more than once evinced, took the greatest pride in his achievements, and a special pleasure at their recital. But even her admiration caused Charles Gordon as much pain as pleasure, and it is recorded that while she was exhibiting to a circle of friends a map drawn by him during his old term days at the Academy, he came into the room, and seeing that it was being made a subject of admiration, took it from his mother, tore it in half, and threw it into the fire-grate. Some little time after he repented of this act of rudeness, collected the fragments, pasted them together, and begged his mother's forgiveness. This damaged plan or map is still in existence. His extraordinary diffidence and shrinking from all forms of praise or exaltation was thus revealed at a comparatively early stage of his career, and in connection with the first deeds that made him famous. The incident just described shows that his way of asserting his individuality was not always unattended with unkindness to those who were nearest and dearest to him. His distrust of his own temper, and of his capacity to speak and act conventionally, urged him towards a solitary life; and when his fate took him into places and forms of employment where solitude was the

essential condition of the service, it is not surprising that his natural shyness and humility, as well as that habit of speaking his own mind, not only without fear or favour, but also, it must be admitted, with considerable disregard for the feelings of others, became intensified, and the most noticeable of his superficial characteristics.

But although Gordon was averse to praise and any special promotion, he was most anxious to resume the work of his profession, in which he took a peculiar pride, and for which he felt himself so thoroughly well suited. His temperament was naturally energetic and impulsive. The independent command he had exercised in China had strengthened these tendencies, and made a dull routine doubly irksome to one whose eager spirit sought action in any form that offered. The quiet domestic life of the family circle at Southampton soon became intolerable to his restless spirit, and although he was entitled to two years' leave after his long foreign service, he took steps to return to active service as an engineer officer within a very few months of his return to England.

On 1st September 1865 he was appointed Commanding Royal Engineer officer at Gravesend, to superintend the erection of the new forts to be constructed in that locality for the defence of the Thames. For such a post his active military service, as well as his technical training, eminently suited him; and although there was little promise of excitement about it, the work was distinctly congenial, and offered him a field for showing practical judgment and skill as an engineer. He threw himself into his task with his characteristic energy and enthusiasm. But how far the latter was damped by his prompt discovery that the whole project of the Thames defences was faulty and unsound it is impossible to say, but his attention to his work in all its details certainly showed no diminution or falling off. There were five forts in all to be constructed—three on the south or Kent side of the river, viz. New Tavern, Shornmead, and Cliffe; and two, Coalhouse and Tilbury, on the north or Essex side. An immense sum had been voted by Parliament for their construction, and Gordon was as loud as an officer dare be in his denunciation of this extravagant waste of money as soon as he discovered by personal examination that the three southern forts could be turned into islands, and severed from all communication by an enemy cutting the river bank at Cooling; and also that the northern forts were not merely unprotected in the rear, like those of the Chinese, but completely commanded from the Essex range of hills. Notwithstanding this important discovery, made at the very beginning, the original scheme was prosecuted to the end, with enormous outlay and useless result, for an entirely new system of river defences had to

be formed and carried out at a later period. But for these errors Gordon was in no sense responsible, and they would not have been committed if his advice and representations had been heeded.

Mr Arthur Stannard, who was assistant to the manager of the firm which had been intrusted with the contract for the building of these forts, gave in the *Nineteenth Century* for April 1885 the best account we possess of the manner in which Colonel Gordon discharged his official duties at Gravesend.

Colonel Gordon's headquarters were at a quaint-looking, old-fashioned house with a good-sized garden, close to the site on which the New Tavern fort was to be erected. He considered himself to be on official duty from eight o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon; and during these six hours he not only worked himself without intermission, but expected all those under him to work in the same untiring spirit. He was a severe and unsparing taskmaster, and allowed no shirking. No other officer could have got half the work out of his men that he did. He used to keep them up to the mark by exclaiming, whenever he saw them flag: "Another five minutes gone, and this not done yet, my men! We shall never have them again."

Another instance of his unflagging energy and extreme activity was furnished in connection with the boat in which he had to visit the different parts of the defences. A two-oared, slow-moving boat was provided for the purpose, but Gordon soon grew tired of this slow means of locomotion, and he started a four-oared gig. He trained these men according to his own ideas, and expected them to row with all their might and main, and to lose not a minute in casting off their boat on his arrival. So fond was he of rapid motion, or so impressed with the value of time, that he would continue to urge them on, whenever any signs of slackening appeared, with exclamations: "A little faster, boys, a little faster!" and Mr Stannard states that he has seen the boatmen land after such a row as this in as limp a condition as four strong men could be. All his own movements were carried on at the run, and his activity was such that few younger and taller men were able to keep up with him. I well recollect myself my first interview with General Gordon in 1881, when he roused me up by a surprise morning visit at eight o'clock—I had not returned from a newspaper office till four o'clock—and carried me off, walking in a light, springy way which was half a run up to the top of Campden Hill, to interview the late Sir Harry Parkes.

While many incidents and the general tenor of his conduct show the natural gentleness of Gordon and his softness of heart, he was a

strict disciplinarian, and even a martinet in some of his ways. As has been said, he came on duty at eight every morning punctually, but he would not allow himself to be intruded upon before that hour. Mr Stannard tells one story that furnishes striking evidence to this effect. Early in the morning the men were brought to a standstill in their work until Colonel Gordon arrived to decide some doubtful or disputed matter. It was noticed that his bedroom window was wide open, and the contractor's manager was induced to go up and knock at his door for instructions. Gordon opened his door a little way, and exclaimed in a testy and irritable tone, "Presently, presently." He made his regular appearance at eight o'clock, and no one ventured to again disturb him before the regulation hour.

With regard to his meals he was most abstemious, and at the same time irregular. His brother describes an arrangement by which he was able to take, at all events, his midday meal, and at the same time to carry on his official work, especially in the matter of receiving visitors. He had a deep drawer in his table, in which the food was deposited. When anyone came to see him, the drawer was closed, and all signs of a meal were concealed. At all periods of his career he was a small and frugal eater, partly because he deprecated extravagance in living, and partly because he considered that the *angina pectoris* from which he thought he suffered could be best coped with by abstention from a sumptuous or heavy diet. Some days he would almost starve himself, and then in the night Nature would assert herself, and he would have to come downstairs and take whatever he found in the larder. It is recorded that on one occasion he sucked ten or a dozen raw eggs. But if he denied himself the luxuries and even the necessaries of a decent table, he possessed the true spirit of hospitality, and never expected his guests to follow any different practice than their own. For them he was always at pains to provide dainty fare and good wine. Nor must undue stress be laid on the isolated cases cited of his indifference to his personal comfort. Gordon was always attentive to his dress and appearance, never forgetting that he was a gentleman and an English officer.

While quartered at Gravesend he received a visit from Sir William Gordon, who had just been appointed to the command of the troops in Scotland. Sir William was no relation, only a member of the same great clan, and he had served with Gordon in the trenches of the Crimea. He had a great admiration and affection for the younger officer, and begged him to accept the post of his *aide-de-camp* in the North. The idea was not a pleasant one to our Gordon, but his good-nature led him to yield to the pressing invitations of his friend; and after he had given his assent, he was ill with nervousness and regret at having

tied himself down to an uncongenial post. In some way or other Sir William heard of his distress, and promptly released him from his promise, only exacting from him the condition that he should pay him a visit at his home in Scotland. Soon afterwards Sir William Gordon became seriously ill, and Charles Gordon hastened to the North, where he remained some time employed in cheering up his friend, who was suffering from hypochondria. Some time afterwards Sir William died under sad circumstances. He had wished to benefit General Gordon by his will, but the latter absolutely refused to have anything except a silver tea service, which he had promised Sir William, while alive, to accept, because "it would pay for his funeral," and save any one being put to expense over that inevitable ceremony. The fate of this tea service, valued at £70, cannot be traced. It had disappeared long before Gordon's departure for Khartoum, and was probably sold for some beneficent work.

The Sir William Gordon incident was not the only external affair that distracted his attention from the monotonous routine work of building forts on a set, but faulty and mistaken, plan. Glad as he was of any work, in preference to the dull existence of a prolonged holiday in the domestic circle, Gravesend was not, after all, the ideal of active service to a man who had found the excitement of warfare so very congenial to his own temperament. When, in the course of 1867 it became evident that an expedition would have to be sent to Abyssinia to release the prisoners, and to bring the Negus Theodore to his senses, Gordon solicited the Horse Guards to include him in any force despatched with this object. There is no reason to think that his wish would not have been complied with if the expedition had been fitted out from England, but it was very wisely decided that the task should be entrusted to the Anglo-Indian Army. The late Lord Napier of Magdala, then Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, was appointed to the command. The officers of his staff, as well as the troops under him, were all drawn from the Bombay Army, and although his connection by marriage, Sir Charles Staveley, held a command under Napier, and would willingly have assisted towards the gratification of his wish, an exception in Gordon's case could not be made without that favouritism which he most deprecated. Still, it was a great disappointment to him, and he shut himself up for a whole day, and would see no one.

If the six years at Gravesend, "the most peaceful and happy of any portion of my life," as he truly said, had left no other trace than his official work, of which the details must necessarily be meagre, there would have been a great blank in his life, and the reader would necessarily possess no clue to the marked change between the Gordon of

China and the Gordon of the Soudan. Not that there was any loss of power or activity, but in the transition period philanthropy had come to occupy the foremost place in Gordon's brain, where formerly had reigned supreme professional zeal and a keen appreciation—I will not say love—of warlike glory. His private life and work at Gravesend explain and justify what was said of him at that time by one of his brother officers: "He is the nearest approach to Jesus Christ of any man who ever lived."

It has been written of him that his house at Gravesend bore more resemblance to the home of a missionary than the quarters of an English officer. His efforts to improve and soften the hard lot of the poor in a place like Gravesend began in a small way, and developed gradually into an extensive system of beneficence, which was only limited by his small resources and the leisure left him by official duty. At first he took into his house two or three boys who attracted his attention in a more or less accidental manner. He taught them in the evening, fed and clothed them, and in due course procured for them employment, principally as sailors or in the colonies. For a naturally bad sailor, he was very fond of the sea; and perhaps in his heart of hearts he cherished the thought that he was performing a national work in directing promising recruits to the first line of our defence, and the main prop of this Empire. Soon his few special pupils swelled into a class, not all boarders, but of outsiders who came in to learn geography and hear the Colonel explain the Bible; and not only that, but to be told of stirring deeds beyond the sea by one who had himself contributed to the making of history. We can well believe that before this uncritical but appreciative audience, from whose favour he had nothing to hope, or, as he would say, to fear, Gordon threw off the restraint and shyness habitual to him. It was very typical of the man that, where others thought only of instructing the poor and the ignorant, his chief wish was to amuse them and make them laugh.

By this simple means his class increased, and grew too large for his room. Sooner than break it up or discourage new-comers, he consented to teach in the ragged schools, where he held evening classes almost every night. Where he had clothed two or three boys, he now distributed several hundred suits in the year; and it is said that his pupils became so numerous that he had to buy pairs of boots by the gross. All this was done out of his pay. His personal expenses were reduced to the lowest point, so that the surplus might suffice to carry on the good work. It very often left him nearly penniless until his next pay became due—and this was not very surprising, as he could never turn a deaf ear to any tale of distress, and often emptied his pockets at the recital of any specially

touching misfortune. When any outside subject of national suffering appealed to his heart or touched his fancy, he would consequently have no means available of sending any help, and this was specially the case during the suffering of the Lancashire operatives after the close of the American Civil War. On that occasion he defaced the gold medal given him by the Chinese Empresses, and sent it anonymously to the fund, which benefited from it to the extent of £10; but, as has been already stated, he made this sacrifice with the greatest pain and reluctance.

Gordon's love of children, and especially of boys, was quite remarkable. He could enter into their feelings far better than he could into those of grown men, and the irritability which he could scarcely suppress even among his friends was never displayed towards them. He was always at their service, anxious to amuse them, and to minister to their rather selfish whims. Some accidental remark led his class to express a wish to visit the Zoo. Gordon at once seized the idea, and said they should do so. He made all the arrangements as carefully as if he were organising a campaign. His duties prevented his going himself, but he saw them off at the station, under the charge of his assistant, and well provided with baskets of food for their dinner and refreshment on their journey. Of course he defrayed the whole expense, and on their return he gave them a treat of tea and strawberries. He also thought of their future, being most energetic in procuring them employment, and anxious in watching their after-career.

For some reason that is not clear he called these boys his "kings." He probably used it in the sense that they were his lieutenants, and he borrowed his imagery from the "Wangs," or kings of the Taeping ruler. I am told, however, that he really used the word in a spiritual sense, testifying that these boys were as kings in the sight of God. He followed the course of the first voyage of those who went to sea, sticking pins in a map to show the whereabouts of their respective vessels. It is not astonishing that his pupils should have felt for him a special admiration and affection. He not merely supplied all their wants, but he endeavoured to make them self-reliant, and to raise them above the sordid and narrow conditions of the life to which they were either born or reduced by the improvidence or misfortune of their parents. Of course Gordon was often deceived, and his confidence and charity abused; but these cases were, after all, the smaller proportion of the great number that passed through his hands. He sometimes met with gross ingratitude, like that of the boy whom he found starving, in rags, and ill with disease, and whom he restored to health, and perhaps to self-respect, and then sent back to his parents in Norfolk. But neither

from him nor from them did he ever receive the briefest line of acknowledgment. Such experiences would have disheartened or deterred other philanthropists, but they failed to ruffle Gordon's serenity, or to discourage him in his work.

Perhaps the following incident is as characteristic as anything that took place between Gordon and his "kings." A boy whom he had twice fitted out for the world, but who always came to grief after a few months' trial, returned for a third time in the evening. Gordon met him at the gate, a mass of rags, in a deplorable condition, and covered with vermin. Gordon could not turn him away, neither could he admit him into his house, where there were several boys being brought up for a respectable existence. After a moment's hesitation, he led him in silence to the stable, where, after giving him some bread and a mug of milk, he told him to sleep on a heap of clean straw, and that he would come for him at six in the morning. At that hour Gordon appeared with a piece of soap, some towels, and a fresh suit of clothes, and, ordering the boy to strip, gave him a thorough washing with his own hands from head to foot at the horse-trough. It is to be regretted that there is no record of the after-fate of this young prodigal, although it would be pleasant to think that he was the unknown man who called at Sir Henry Gordon's house in 1885, after the news of Gordon's death, and wished to contribute £25 towards a memorial, because he was one of the youths saved by General Gordon, to whom all his success and prosperity in life were due.

But it must not be supposed that Gordon's acts of benevolence were restricted to boys. He was not less solicitous of the welfare of the sick and the aged. His garden was a rather pretty and shaded one. He had a certain number of keys made for the entrance, and distributed them among deserving persons, chiefly elderly. They were allowed to walk about, in the evening especially, and see the flowers, vegetables, and fruit which Gordon's gardener carefully cultivated. Gordon himself declared that he derived no special pleasure from the sight of flowers, for the simple reason that he preferred to look at the human face; and the same reason is the only one I can find he ever gave for his somewhat remarkable reticence about dogs and other domestic animals. It was said of him that he always had handy "a bit o' baccy for the old men, and a screw o' tea for the old women." He would hurry off at a moment's notice to attend to a dying person or to read the Bible by a sick-bed. In the hospital or the workhouse he was as well known as the visiting chaplain, and often he was requested by the parish clergyman to take his place in visiting the sick. His special invention for the benefit of his large

number of clients was a system of pensions, which varied from a shilling to as much as a pound a week. Many of these payments he continued long after he left Gravesend, and a few were even paid until the day of his death. It is not surprising, in view of these facts, that Gordon remained a poor man, and generally had no money at all. As he wrote very truly of himself to his assistant Mr Lilley, "You and I will never learn wisdom in money matters."

Many stories have been told of his tenderness of heart, and of his reluctance to see punishment inflicted, but perhaps the following is the most typical. A woman called on him one day with a piteous tale. Gordon went to his bedroom to get half a sovereign for her, and while he was away she took a fancy to a brown overcoat, which she hastened to conceal under her skirt. Gordon returned, gave her the money, and she left with a profusion of thanks. While on her road home the coat slipped down, and attracted the notice of a policeman, who demanded an explanation. She said, "I took it from the Colonel," and was marched back for him to identify his property, and charge her with the theft. When Gordon heard the story, he was far more distressed than the culprit, and refused to comply with the constable's repeated requests to charge her. At last a happy thought came to his relief. Turning to the woman, he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "You wanted it, I suppose?" "Yes," replied the astonished woman. Then turning to the equally astonished policeman he said, "There, there, take her away, and send her about her business."

Among the various economies he practised in order to indulge his philanthropy was that of not keeping a horse, and he consequently took a great deal of walking exercise. During his walks along the Kentish lanes and foot-paths he distributed tracts, and at every stile he crossed he would leave one having such an exhortation as "Take heed that thou stumbleth not." Yet all this was done in an honest, and, as I believe, a secretly humorous spirit of a serious nature, for Gordon was as opposed to cant and idle protestations as any man. There is a strikingly characteristic story preserved somewhere of what he did when a hypocritical, canting humbug of a local religious secretary of some Society Fund or other paid a visit to a house while he was present. Gordon remained silent during the whole of the interview. But when he was gone, and Gordon was asked what he thought of him, he replied by waving his hand and drawing it across his throat, which he explained signified in China that his head ought to be cut off as a humbugging impostor.

Although buried, as it were, at Gravesend, Gordon could not be altogether forgotten. The authorities at the Horse Guards could not

comply with his request to be attached to the Abyssinian expedition, but they were willing enough to do him what in official circles was thought to be a very good turn when they could. The English membership of the Danubian Commission became vacant, and it was remembered that in his early days Gordon had taken part in the delimitation negotiations which had resulted in the formation of that body. The post carried with it the good pay of £2000 a year, as some compensation for the social and sanitary drawbacks and disadvantages of life in that region, and it was offered to Gordon, who accepted it. It cut short his philanthropical labours, but it drew him back into that current of active work for which he was already pining. He therefore accepted it, and having presented some of the Snake flags of the old Taeping Wangs to the local school in which he had toiled as a simple teacher, he left Gravesend quietly, and without any manifestation that it had lost its principal resident. Having mentioned the Snake flags, it is proper to add that the principal of these, including some of his own which were shot to ribbons, were left by General Gordon to his sister, the late Miss Gordon, who in her turn presented them, with the Yellow Jacket and its appendages, the chief mandarin dress, etc., to the Royal Engineers at Chatham. The Gravesend life closed with a notice in the local journal, from which the following extract may be made; but once a year the old flags that led the advance or retreat of the Chinese rebels are brought out from their cases and flaunted before the Gravesend scholars as the memorial of a brave and unselfish leader and teacher.

The farewell article in the local paper read as follows:—

"Our readers, without exception, will learn with regret of the departure of Lieut.-Colonel Gordon, R.E., C.B., from the town in which he has resided for six years, gaining a name by the most exquisite charity that will long be remembered. Nor will he be less missed than remembered in the lowly walks of life, by the bestowal of gifts, by attendance and administration on the sick and dying, by the kindly giving of advice, by attendance at the Ragged School, Workhouse, and Infirmary—in fact, by general and continued beneficence to the poor, he has been so unwearied in well-doing that his departure will be felt by many as a personal calamity. There are those who even now are reaping the rewards of his kindness. His charity was essentially charity, and had its root in deep philanthropic feeling and goodness of heart, shunning the light of publicity, but coming even as the rain in the night-time, that in the morning is noted not, but only the flowers bloom, and give a greater fragrance. . . . All will wish him well in his new sphere, and we have less hesitation in penning these lines from the fact

that laudatory notice will confer but little pleasure upon him who gave with the heart and cared not for commendation."

Gordon left for Galatz on 1st October 1871. He had visited and described it fourteen or fifteen years before, and he found little or no change there. The special task intrusted to the Commission of which he was a member was to keep open by constant and vigilant dredging the mouth of the Sulina branch of the Danube. He discovered very soon that the duties were light and monotonous, and in the depressing atmosphere—social and political as well as climatic—of the Lower Danube, he pined more than ever for bracing work, and for some task about which he could feel in earnest. The same conclusion seems to have forced itself upon his mind at the beginning and at the end of his stay at Galatz. In one of his first letters he exclaims: "How I like England when I am out of it! There is no place in the world like it!" In another letter, written on the very day of his departure home, he wrote: "Tell S. to thank God that he was born an Englishman." Gordon was always intensely patriotic. His patriotism partook of the same deep and fervid character as his religion, and these and many other little messages in his private correspondence furnish striking evidence to the fact.

The mention of Galatz recalls an incident, showing how long was his memory, and how much he clung to old friendships. During the Commune—that is to say, when he was still at Gravesend—the papers stated that a General Bisson had been killed at the Bridge of Neuilly on 9th April 1871. He wrote to Marshal Macmahon to inquire if he was the same officer as his old colleague on the Danube, and received, to his regret, an affirmative answer. General Bisson and Gordon had kept up a correspondence, in which the former always signed himself Bisson, C.B., being very proud of that honour, which was conferred on him for the Crimea. He was taken prisoner early in the Franco-Prussian war, and was shot by the Communists almost immediately on his return from the Prussian prison. Gordon's stay at Galatz was varied by an agreeable trip in 1872 to the Crimea, where he was sent to inspect the cemeteries with Sir John Adye. They travelled in an English gunboat, which proved a comfortable sea-boat, and Gordon wrote, "General Adye is a very agreeable companion." The cemeteries were found much neglected, and in a sad state of disrepair. The Russian officers were pronounced civil, but nothing more. But Gordon saw clearly that, having torn up the Black Sea Treaty, they were ready to recover Bessarabia, and to restore Sebastopol to the rank of a first-class naval fortress. After the Crimean tour he came to England on leave. His time was short, but he managed to pay a flying visit to Gravesend

He also could not resist the temptation of attending the funeral of the Emperor Napoleon in January 1873, and he expressed his opinion of that ill-starred ruler in his usual terse manner—"a kind-hearted, unprincipled man." His youngest brother, to whom he was much attached, and who had shared in the Woolwich frolics, died about this time, and his mother was seized with paralysis, and no longer recognised him. He felt this change most acutely, for between him and his mother there had been a peculiar attachment, and when he was at home she would hardly ever let him out of her sight. He used to call his home visits doing duty as his mother's *aide-de-camp*. When he left England for Galatz she was unconscious, and passed away some months later while he was abroad.

It was while General Gordon was on the Danube that preparations were made for the expedition against the Ashantees, and many persons suggested General Gordon for the command. It would have been an excellent occasion for intrusting him with an independent command in his country's service; but Sir Garnet, now Lord, Wolseley had recently gained much credit by his conduct of the Red River Expedition, and was appointed to the command of this force. General Gordon was no doubt disappointed at the result, but not so much as he had been in the case of Abyssinia, and loyalty to an old Crimean colleague tempered his own loss with satisfaction at another's success. Still, on public grounds, it must be pronounced unfortunate that the last occasion which was offered of employing for a national cause the services of a soldier who added the fervour and modesty of Wolfe to the genius of Clive should have been allowed to pass by unutilised.

A casual meeting with Nubar Pasha at Constantinople, on his way back from the Crimea in 1872, was destined to exercise what may be styled a determining influence on the rest of Gordon's life. At that meeting Nubar Pasha sounded him as to his willingness to take service under the Khedive, and Gordon, attracted by the prospect of doing good work on a larger sphere, expressed his own readiness to take up the task of establishing authority, and suppressing slavery in the Soudan, provided that the permission of his own Government were granted. He heard nothing more of the matter for twelve months, but at the end of September 1873 he received a communication to the effect that the Khedive wished to appoint him to succeed Sir Samuel Baker, and that the British Government were quite willing to grant him the necessary permission. In a letter of 8th November 1873 to the Adjutant-General he said:—

"I have written an account of what I know of the Khedive's having asked me to take Baker's place. It came about from a conversation

I had with Nubar Pasha at our Embassy at Constantinople. This was twelve months ago. The next thing was a telegram a month ago. I have not determined what to do, but the Government have no objection."

He was not long, however, in making up his mind, and early in 1874 he was *en route* for Alexandria. One characteristic act in connection with his appointment deserves mention. The Khedive fixed his salary at £10,000 a year, but Gordon absolutely refused to accept more than £2000 a year—the same sum as he received for his post on the Danube. Various reasons have been given for this decision, but there is no ground for supposing that it was due to such a very narrow-minded prejudice as "that he would take nothing from a heathen." If he ever used these words, they must have been intended as a joke, and are not to be accepted seriously. A sufficient explanation of his decision is, that he had a supreme disdain for money, and the sum offered seemed far in excess of the post and work he had to perform. To have received £10,000 a year would have added immensely to his worries. He would not have known what to do with it, and the voluntary cutting of his salary relieved him of a weight of responsibility. Perhaps also he was far-seeing enough to realise that he would be less the mere creature of the Egyptian ruler with the smaller than with the larger salary, while he could gratify his own inner pride that no one should say that any sordid motive had a part in his working for semi-civilized potentates, whether Chinese or Mussulmen.

I am able to describe Gordon's exact feelings on this point in his own words. "My object is to show the Khedive and his people that gold and silver idols are not worshipped by all the world. They are very powerful gods, but not so powerful as *our* God. From whom does all this money come? from poor miserable creatures who are ground down to produce it. Of course these ideas are outrageous. Pillage the Egyptians is still the cry."

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CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST NILE MISSION.

A BRIEF description of the conquest by Mehemet Ali and his successors of the Soudan—a name signifying nothing more than "the land of the blacks"—and of the events which immediately preceded the appointment of Gordon, is necessary to show the extent of the work intrusted to him, and the special difficulties with which he had to contend.

It was in 1819 that the great Pasha or Viceroy Mehemet Ali, still in name the lieutenant of the Sultan, ordered his sons Ismail and the more famous Ibrahim to extend his authority up the Nile, and conquer the Soudan. They do not seem to have experienced any difficulty in carrying out their instructions. Nobody was interested in defending the arid wastes of that region. The Egyptian yoke promised to be as light as any other, and a few whiffs of grape-shot dispersed the only adversaries who showed themselves. Ibrahim, who soon took the lead, selected Khartoum as the capital of the new province, in preference to Shendy, which had formerly been regarded as the principal place in the country. In this he showed excellent judgment, for Khartoum occupies an admirable position in the fork of the two branches of the Nile; and whatever fate may yet befall the region in which the Mahdi and his successor the Khalifa have set up their ephemeral authority, it is destined by Nature to be the central point and capital of the vast region between the Delta and the Equatorial Lakes.

Khartoum lies on the left bank of the Blue Nile—Bahr-el-Azrak—rather more than three miles south of its confluence with the White Nile—Bahr-el-Abiad—at the northern point of the Isle of Tuti. The channel south of that island affords a slightly nearer approach to the White Nile, coming out immediately opposite the fortified camp of Omdurman, which the Mahdi made his headquarters and capital after the famous siege of 1884. There was nothing attractive or imposing about Khartoum. It contained 3000 mud houses, and one more pretentious building in the Governor's official residence or palace, known as the Hukumdariaha. It is surrounded by a wall and ditch, except where the Blue Nile supplies the need; and its western wall is not more

than half a mile from the banks of the White Nile, so that with proper artillery it commands both rivers. The Nilometer at this place used to give the first and early intimation to the cultivators in Lower Egypt of the quantity of water being brought down from the rivers of Abyssinia. There seems no other conclusion possible than that sooner or later this practical service will compel Egypt, whenever she feels strong enough, to re-establish her power at Khartoum; already there is evidence that the time has arrived.

Having conquered the Soudan easily, the rulers of Egypt experienced no difficulty in retaining it for sixty years; and if other forces, partly created by the moral pressure of England and civilized opinion generally, had not come into action, there is every reason to suppose that their authority would never have been assailed. Nor did the Egyptians stand still. By the year 1853 they had conquered Darfur on the one side, and pushed their outposts on the other 120 miles south of Khartoum. In the rear of the Egyptian garrison came the European trader, who took into his service bands of Arab mercenaries, so that he pushed his way beyond the Egyptian stations into the region of the Bahr Gazelle, where the writ of the Cairo ruler did not run. These traders came to deal in ivory, but they soon found that, profitable as it was, there was a greater profit in, and a far greater supply of, "black ivory." Thus an iniquitous trade in human beings sprang up, and the real originators of it were not black men and Mahommedans, but white men, and in many instances Englishmen. From slave buying they took to slave hunting, and in this way there is no exaggeration in declaring that villages and districts were depopulated. Such scandalous proceedings could not be carried on in the dark, and at last the Europeans involved felt compelled, by the weight of adverse opinion, or more probably from a sense of their own peril, to withdraw from the business. This touch of conscience or alarm did not improve the situation. They sold their stations to their Arab agents, who in turn purchased immunity from the Egyptian officers. The slave trade, by the pursuit and capture of any tribe rash enough to come within the spring of the Arab raiders, flourished as much as ever. The only change was that after 1860 Europeans were clear of the stigma that attached to any direct participation in it.

The condition of the Soudan during this period has been graphically described by Captain Speke, Dr Schweinfurth, and Sir Samuel Baker. They all agree in their facts and their conclusions. The people were miserably unhappy, because the dread and the reality of compulsory slavery hung over their daily life. Those who were not already slaves realised their impending fate. Villages were abandoned, districts passed

out of cultivation, and a large part of the population literally vanished. Sir Samuel Baker, speaking of the difference between a region he knew well in 1864 and in 1872, wrote in the latter year: "It is impossible to describe the change that has taken place since I last visited this country. It was then a perfect garden, thickly populated, and producing all that man could desire. The villages were numerous, groves of plantains fringed the steep cliffs on the river's bank, and the natives were neatly dressed in the bark cloth of the country. The scene has changed! All is wilderness. The population has fled! Not a village is to be seen! This is the certain result of the settlement of Khartoum traders. They kidnap the women and children for slaves, and plunder and destroy wherever they set their foot." How true all this was will be seen in the course of Gordon's own experiences.

It has been stated that the Arab slave-dealers made terms with the Egyptian officials, and they were even not without influence and the means of gaining favourable consideration at Cairo itself. But as they increased in numbers, wealth, and confidence in themselves and their organisation, the Khedive began to see in them a possible danger to his own authority. This feeling was strengthened when the slavers, under the leadership of the since notorious Zebehr Rahama, the most ambitious and capable of them all, refused to pay their usual tribute. Dr Schweinfurth has given a vivid picture of this man in the heyday of his power. Chained lions formed part of his escort, and it is recorded that he had 25,000 dollars' worth of silver cast into bullets in order to foil the magic of any enemy who was said to be proof against lead. Strong as this truculent leader was in men and money, the Khedive Ismail did not believe that he would dare to resist his power. He therefore decided to have recourse to force, and in 1869 he sent a small military expedition, under the command of Bellal Bey, to bring the Bahr Gazelle into submission. Zebehr had made all his arrangements for defence, and on the Egyptian army making its appearance he promptly attacked and annihilated it. This success fully established the power and reputation of Zebehr, who became the real dictator of the Soudan south of Khartoum. The Khedive, having no available means of bringing his rebellious dependent to reason, had to acquiesce in the defeat of his army. Zebehr offered some lame excuse for his boldness and success, and Ismail had to accept it, and bide the hour of revenge.

Zebehr, encouraged by this military triumph, turned his arms against the Sultans of Darfour, who had incurred his resentment by placing an embargo on wheat during the course of his brief campaign with Bellal. This offensive action still further alarmed the Khedive Ismail, who was

fully alive to the danger that might arise to his own position if a powerful military confederacy, under a capable chief, were ever organised in the Soudan. Instead of allying himself with the Darfourians, as would probably have been the more politic course, Ismail decided to invade their territory simultaneously with Zebehr. Several battles were fought, and one after another the Sultans of Darfour, whose dynasty had reigned for 400 years, were overthrown and slain. Zebehr received in succession the Turkish titles of Bey and Pasha, but he was not satisfied, for he said that as he had done all the fighting, he ought to receive the Governor-Generalship of Darfour. If he failed to win that title from the Khedive, he succeeded in gratifying a more profitable desire, by leading off into slavery the larger half of the population of Darfour. He was still engaged in this pursuit at the time of Gordon's appearance on the scene, and the force at his disposal was thus described by that officer: "Smart, dapper-looking fellows, like antelopes, fierce, unsparing, the terror of Central Africa, having a prestige far beyond that of the Government—these are the slave-dealers' tools," and afterwards they no doubt became the main phalanx of the Mahdi's military system.

The financial position of the Egyptian Government in the Soudan was as bad as the military and political. The Khedive's Governor-General at Khartoum, Ismail Yakoob Pasha, was nominally responsible for the administration of Darfour, although Zebehr reaped all the gain. This arrangement resulted in a drain on the Khedive's exchequer of £50,000 a year. The revenue failed to meet the expenditure in the other departments, and this was mainly due to the fact that the slavers no longer paid toll or tithe in the only trade that they had allowed to exist in the Soudan. What share of the human traffic they parted with was given in the way of bribes, and found no place in the official returns. All the time that this drain continued the Khedive was in a constant state of apprehension as to the danger which might arise to him in the south. He was also in receipt of frequent remonstrances from the English and other Governments as to the iniquities of the slave-trade, for which he was primarily in no sense to blame. On the other hand, he derived no benefit from the Soudan; and if he thought he could have obtained a secure frontier at Abou Hamid, or even at Wadi Halfa, he would have resigned all the rest without a sigh. But it was his strong conviction that no such frontier was attainable, and Ismail clung to his nominal and costly authority over the Soudan in the hope that some improvement might be effected, or that, in the chapter of accidents, the unexpected might come to his aid.

Alarmed as to his own position, in view of the ambition of Zebehr, and harassed by the importunities of England, Ismail, acting on the

advice of his able and dexterous Minister, Nubar Pasha, one of the most skilful diplomatists the East has ever produced, came to the decision to relieve himself from at least the latter annoyance, by the appointment of Gordon. This was the main object the Khedive and his advisers had in view when they invited Gordon to accept the post of Governor of the Equatorial Provinces in succession to Sir Samuel Baker, who resigned what he found after many years' experience was a hopeless and thankless task. The post was in one sense peculiar. It was quite distinct from that of the Egyptian Governor-General at Khartoum, who retained his separate and really superior position in the administration of the Upper Nile region. Moreover, the finances of the Equatorial districts were included in the general Soudan Budget, which always showed an alarming deficit. These arrangements imparted a special difficulty into the situation with which Gordon had to deal, and his manner of coping with it will reveal how shrewd he was in detecting the root-cause of any trouble, and how prompt were his measures to eradicate the mischief. From the first he fully realised why he was appointed, viz. "to catch the attention of the English people"; but he also appreciated the Khedive's "terrible anxiety to put down the slave-trade, which threatens his supremacy." With these introductory remarks, the main thread of Gordon's career may be resumed.

After the brief hesitation referred to in the last chapter, and the reduction of his salary to what he deemed reasonable dimensions, Gordon proceeded to Cairo, where he arrived early in the year 1874. As in everything else he undertook, Gordon was in earnest about the work he had to attempt, and no doubt he had already formed in his mind a general plan of action, which would enable him to suppress the slave-trade. Here it will suffice to say that his project was based on the holding of the White Nile by a line of fortified posts, and with the river steamers, which would result in cutting off the slave hunters from their best source of supply. The expression of his plans in his earnest manner showed up by contrast the hollowness of the views and policy of those who had obtained his services. In his own graphic and emphatic way he wrote: "I thought the thing real and found it a sham, and felt like a Gordon who has been humbugged." He found Cairo "a regular hot-bed of intrigues," and among not only the Egyptian, but also the European officials. With a prophetic grasp of the situation he wrote, "Things cannot last long like this." Had Gordon been long detained at Cairo, where the etiquette and the advice offered him by every one in an official position exasperated him beyond endurance, there is no doubt that he would have thrown up his task in disgust. He was animated by the desire to make the sham a reality, and to convert the project

with which he had been intrusted into a beneficial scheme for the suffering population of the Soudan. There, at least, he would be removed from the intrigues of the capital, and at liberty to speak his own thoughts without giving umbrage to one person and receiving worldly counsel from another.

One of the chief bones of contention during the few weeks he passed at Cairo was the dispute as to how he should travel to the scene of his government. He wished to go by ordinary steamer, with one servant. The Minister insisted that he should travel by a special steamer, and accompanied by a retinue. Gordon's plan would have saved the Khedive's Government £400, but he had to give way to the proprieties. The affair had an amusing issue. His special train to Suez met with an accident, and he and the Egyptian officials sent to see him off were compelled, after two hours' delay, to change into another train, and continue their journey in an ordinary passenger carriage, much to the amusement of Gordon, who wrote: "We began in glory and ended in shame!" On arrival at Souakim, Gordon was put into quarantine for a night, in order, as he said, that the Governor might have time to put on his official clothes.

Soon his attention was drawn from such frivolities as these to more serious matters. He left Cairo on 21st February, reached Souakim on 26th, left Souakim on 1st March, Berber on 9th March, and entered Khartoum 13th March. He brought with him 200 fresh troops, and was welcomed with considerable display and many hollow protestations of friendship by the Governor-General, Ismail Yakoob.

A few weeks before his arrival at Khartoum an important event had taken place, which greatly simplified his ulterior operations. The "sudd," an accumulation of mould and aquatic plants which had formed into a solid mass and obstructed all navigation, had suddenly given way, and restored communication with Gondokoro and the lakes. The importance of this event may be measured by the fact that whereas the journey to Gondokoro, with the "sudd" in existence, took twenty months and even two years to perform, it was reduced by its dispersal to twenty-one days. General Gordon wrote the following very pretty description of this grassy barrier and its origin:

"A curious little cabbage-like aquatic plant comes floating down, having a little root ready to attach itself to anything; he meets a friend, and they go together, and soon join roots and so on. When they get to a lake, the current is too strong, and so, no longer constrained to move on, they go off to the sides; others do the same—idle and loitering, like everything up here. After a time winds drive a whole fleet of them against the narrow outlet of the lake and stop it up. Then no more

passenger plants can pass through the outlet, while plenty come in at the upper end of the lake; these eventually fill up all the passages which may have been made."

Gordon had the control of seven steamers, and in one of these he left Khartoum on 22nd March for the Upper Nile. He had already issued his first decree as Governor of the Equator, in which he declared the sale of ivory to be a Government monopoly, and forbade the importation of firearms and ammunition. It was while he was on this journey that he heard some birds—a kind of stork—laughing on the banks of the river. In his letters to his sister, which were to stand in the place of a diary, he facetiously remarks that he supposes they were amused at the idea of anyone being so foolish as to go up the Nile in "the hope of doing anything." But Gordon was not to be discouraged. Already he liked his work, amid the heat and mosquitoes day and night all the year round, and already he was convinced that he could do a good deal to ameliorate the lot of the unfortunate people. He reached Gondokoro on 16th April, where not only was he not expected, but he found them ignorant even of his appointment. He remained there only a few days, as he perceived he could do nothing without his stores, still *en route* from Cairo, and returned to Khartoum, which he reached in eleven days.

This brief trip satisfied him of several simple facts bearing on the situation in the Equatorial Province which the Khedive had sent him with such a flourish of trumpets to govern. He found very easily that the Egyptian Government possessed no practical authority in that region. Beyond the two forts at Gondokoro—garrison 300 men—and Fatiko—garrison 200 men—the Khedive had no possessions, and there was not even safety for his representatives half a mile from their guns. As Gordon said: "The Khedive gave me a Firman as Governor-General of the Equator, and left me to work out the rest." He began the practical part of his task on the occasion of this return to Khartoum by insisting that the accounts of the Equatorial Province should be kept distinct from those of the Soudan, and also that Ragouf Pasha, sent nominally to assist but really to hinder him, should be withdrawn.

Having asserted his individuality after several rows with Ismail Yakoob, he became impatient at the delayed arrival of his stores and staff, and hastened off to Berber to hurry their progress. As he was fond of saying, "Self is the best officer," and his visit to Berber hastened the arrival of the supplies which were necessary for his subsequent operations. His staff consisted of Colonel Long, of the United States Army, who had accompanied him to Gondokoro and been left there; Major Campbell, Egyptian Staff; Mr Kemp, an engineer; M. Linant,

a Frenchman; Mr Anson, Mr Russell, and the Italian Romulus Gessi. Two Royal Engineer officers, Lieutenants Chippendall and Charles Watson, joined him before the end of the year. He worked very hard himself, and he expected those under him to do the same. The astonished Egyptian officials looked on in amazement at one in high rank, who examined into every detail himself, and who took his turn of the hard work. One of Gordon's forms of recreation was to get out and help to pull his *dahabeah*. Tucking up his trousers, he would wade through the river fearlessly, having learnt from the natives that crocodiles never attack a person moving.

At first Ismail Yakoob and his colleagues were filled with curiosity and amusement at this phenomenal Englishman—so different, not merely from themselves, but from other Europeans—then apprehension seized them as to what he would do next in the way of exposing their neglect of duty, and finally only the capacity for one sentiment was left—relief whenever he turned his back on Khartoum.

Having collected his staff and supplies, he started up the Nile once more, to begin the establishment of the line of fortified posts, which he had resolved on as the best means of maintaining and extending his own authority, and at the same time of curtailing the raids of the slave-dealers. The first of these forts or stations he established at the entrance of the Saubat river, and while there he made a discovery which showed how the slave-trade flourished with such impunity. He seized some letters from a slave-dealer to the Egyptian commander at Fashoda, stating that he was bringing him the slaves he wanted for himself and many others, besides 2000 cows. By several skilful manœuvres Gordon succeeded in rescuing all of them, restoring the cows to their owners, and compelling the soldiers of the slave-hunters to return to their homes, generally in or near Khartoum. Nor was this his only success during the first two months of his government, for he detected one of his lieutenants in the act of letting a slave convoy pass in return for a bribe of £70. On this occasion he had the satisfaction of delivering 1600 human beings from slavery. This will show that one of his principal difficulties was caused by his own subordinates, who were hand-in-glove with the leading slave-hunters. Another of Gordon's troubles arose from the collapse of his staff under the terrible heat. Of those enumerated as having gone up with or to him in May, all were dead or invalided in September; and the duties of sick-nurse at last became so excessive that Gordon had to order, in his own quaint manner, that no one who was sick should be allowed to come to headquarters. Only in this way was he able to obtain the time necessary for the accomplishment, single

handed, of his various duties. Such was the strain on him that he gave positive injunctions that no more Europeans, and especially young English officers, were to be sent up to him.

As soon as it was realised that the new Governor was in earnest, that he was bent on crushing the slave-trade, and that he would not permit corruption or extortion in any form, he became the mark of general hostility. The intrigues to mislead and discredit him were incessant. Abou Saoud, who had been formerly banished by Sir Samuel Baker from the Soudan, and then taken into high favour by Gordon, turned out a fraud and a failure, while Raouf Bey, the nominee of the Khartoum Governor-General, was sent back in disgrace. With regard to Abou Saoud it may be said that Gordon never really trusted him, that is to say he was not taken in by him, but believed he would be less able to do injury in his service than at a distance. It was precisely the same principle as led him to solicit the co-operation of Zebehr in 1884.

Gordon's method of dealing with those who caused him trouble was short and simple. It consisted in a brief but unchallengeable order to go back to the base. As the officials would have been murdered by the people they had so long and so often injured if they attempted to seek shelter among them, they had no alternative save to obey; and thus, one after another, Gordon brushed the chief obstructionists from his path. He served the old troublesome soldiers who would not work or change their ways after the same fashion, by sending them to his Botany Bay at Khartoum. In the midst of all these troubles he kept well, although "a mere shadow," and he still retained the conviction that he would be able to do much good work in this unpromising region.

In dealing with the natives, he endeavoured first to induce them to cultivate the ground, providing them with seed and dhoora (*sorghum*), and then to accustom them to the use of money. He bought their ivory and paid for it in coin, so that in a little time he found that the inhabitants, who had held aloof from all previous Egyptian officials, freely brought him their ivory and produce for sale. At the same time, he made it a point to pay scrupulously for any service the natives rendered, and he even endeavoured, as far as he could, to put employment in their way. The practice of the Egyptian officials had been to lay hands on any natives that came across their path, and compel them by force to perform any work they might deem necessary, and then to dismiss them without reward or thanks. The result was a deep-rooted execration of the whole Egyptian system, which found voice in the most popular war-cry of the region: "We want no Turks here! Let us drive them away!" But Gordon's mode was widely different.

It was based on justice and reason, and in the long-run constituted sound policy. He paid for what he took, and when he used the natives to drag his boats, or to clear tracks through the grassy zone fringing the Nile, he always carefully handed over to them cows, dhoora, or money, as an equivalent for their work. On the other hand, he was not less prompt to punish hostile tribes by imposing taxes on them, and, when unavoidable, inflicting punishment as well. But the system averted, as far as possible, the necessity of extreme measures, and in this the first period of his rule in the Soudan he had few hostile collisions with the natives of the country. Indeed, with the exception of the Bari tribe, who entrapped Linant, Gordon's best lieutenant after Gessi, and slew him with a small detachment, Gordon's enemies in the field proved few and insignificant. Even the Baris would not have ventured to attack him but for the acquaintance with, and contempt of, firearms they had obtained during an earlier success over an Egyptian corps.

There is no doubt that this absence of any organised opposition was fortunate, for the so-called troops at the disposal of the Governor of the Equator were as miserably inefficient and contemptible, from a fighting point of view, as any General Gordon ever commanded; and at a later stage of his career he plaintively remarked that it had fallen to his lot to lead a greater number of cowardly and unwarlike races than anyone else. But it was not merely that they were such poor fighters that Gordon declared that three natives would put a company to flight, but they were so disinclined for any work, and so encumbered by their women and children, that their ability to make any military show might be as safely challenged as their combative spirit. Well might Gordon write: "I never had less confidence in any troops in my life." But even these shortcomings were not the worst. The Arab soldiers provided by the Egyptian Government, and sent up over and over again, in spite of Gordon's protests and entreaties, could not stand the climate. They died like flies. Of one detachment of 250, half were dead in three months, 100 of the others were invalided, and only 25 remained fit for duty. From a further body of 150 men sent as a reinforcement, half were reported on the sick list the day after their arrival. The main buttress of the Khedive's authority in this region was therefore hollow and erected on an insecure foundation. The Egyptian soldiers possessed firearms, and the natives, in their ignorance that they could not shoot straight, were afraid of them; but the natural progress of knowledge would inevitably prove fatal to that unreal supremacy, and eventually entail the collapse of the Cairo administration in the Soudan and the remoter districts on the Equator.

Realising the inefficiency of the Egyptian force, General Gordon set himself to the task of providing a better; and mindful of the contingent danger of creating a corps that might in the end prove a peril to the system it was meant to protect, he resolved that, if individually brave and efficient, it should be exceedingly limited in numbers, and incapable of casting aside its allegiance to the Khedive. He began in a small way by engaging the services of any stalwart Soudanese native whom chance placed in his path, and thus he organised in the first year of his rule a corps of about forty men as a sort of bodyguard. An accident brought him into contact with a party of the Niam Niam, a tribe of cannibals from the interior of Africa, but possessing a martial spirit and athletic frames. Gordon looked at them with the eye of a soldier, and on the spot enrolled fifty of them into the small force he was organising. He armed them with spears as well as guns, and as these spears were cutting ones, with a blade two feet long, they were the more formidable weapon of the two. Gordon describes the Niam Niam warriors as looking very fierce, and brave, and fearless. They were also thick-set and sturdy, and, above all, so indifferent to the tropical heat that they might be relied on not to break down from the climate like the Egyptian soldiers. Before the end of the year 1876 he had increased the numbers of these two contingents to 500 men. It was with these black troops that Gordon humbled the pride of the Baris, elated by their two successes, and provided for the security of the long Nile route to the lakes.

There was another advantage besides the military in this practical measure, one of those numerous administrative acts, in every clime and under innumerable conditions, that established the fame and the sound sense and judgment of General Gordon. It promoted economy, and contributed to the sound finance which Gordon always set himself to establish wherever he was responsible. One of Gordon's first resolutions had been that his part of the Soudan should cease to be a drain, like the rest, on the Cairo Exchequer. He determined that he at least would pay his way, and on the threshold of his undertaking he had insisted, and carried in the teeth of powerful opposition his resolution, that the accounts of the Equatorial Province should be kept distinct from those of the Soudan. The employment of black soldiers was very economical as well as efficient, and contributed to the satisfactory result which was shown in the balance-sheet of the Equatorial Province as described by General Gordon for the year 1875. In that year the Khedive received £48,000 from the Province which Gordon ruled at a total cost of only £20,000, while he had also formed a surplus or reserve fund of £60,000 more.

Having thus accomplished as much as possible towards the strength-

ening of the administration and tranquillisation of the people, some further particulars may be recorded of his measures and success in dealing with that slave-trade, the existence of which was the primary cause of his own appearance in the Soudan. Allusion has already been made to the considerable number of slaves rescued by a few grand *coups* at the expense of his own subordinates, but during the whole of these three years Gordon was in close contact with slaves, and the rescue of individuals was of frequent occurrence. Several touching incidents are recorded in the letters published from Central Africa as to his kindness towards women and infants, to some of whom he even gave the shelter of his own tent; and nothing could be more effective in the way of illustration than his simple description of the following passage with the child-wife of one of his own soldiers:

"The night before I left this place a girl of twelve years, in one of those leather strap girdles, came up to the fire where I was sitting, and warmed herself. I sent for the interpreter, and asked what she wanted. She said the soldier who owned her beat her, and she would not stay with him; so I put her on board the steamer. The soldier was very angry, so I said: 'If the girl likes to stay with you, she may; if she does not, she is free.' The girl would not go back, so she stays on the steamer."

Nor was this the only incident of the kind to show not merely the tenderness of his heart, but the extraordinary reputation Gordon had acquired by his high-minded action among these primitive and down-trodden races. Here are some others that have been selected almost at random out of his daily acts of gentleness and true charity:—

"I took a poor old bag of bones into my camp a month ago, and have been feeding her up, but yesterday she was quietly taken off, and now knows all things. She had her tobacco up to the last, and died quite quietly. . . . A wretched *sister* of yours [addressed to the late Miss Gordon] is struggling up the road, but she is such a wisp of bones that the wind threatens to overthrow her; so she has halted, preferring the rain to being cast down. I have sent her some dhoora, which will produce a spark of joy in her black and withered carcass. I told my man to see her into one of the huts, and thought he had done so. The night was stormy and rainy, and when I awoke I heard often a crying of a child near my hut within the enclosure. When I got up I went out to see what it was, and passing through the gateway, I saw your and my sister lying dead in a pool of mud—her black brothers had been passing and passing, and had taken no notice of her—so I ordered her to be buried, and went on. In the midst of the high grass was a baby, about a year or so old, left by itself. It had been

out all night in the rain, and had been left by its mother. I carried it in, and seeing the corpse was not moved, I sent again about it, and went with the men to have it buried. To my surprise and astonishment, she was alive. After considerable trouble I got the black brothers to lift her out of the mud, poured some brandy down her throat, and got her into a hut with a fire, having the mud washed out of her eyes. She was not more than sixteen years of age. There she now lies. I cannot help hoping she is floating down with the tide to the haven of rest. The next day she was still alive, and the babe, not a year old, seized a gourd of milk, and drank it off like a man, and is apparently in for the pilgrimage of life. It does not seem the worse for its night out, depraved little wretch! . . . The black sister departed this life at 4 P.M., deeply lamented by me, not so by her black brothers, who thought her a nuisance. When I went to see her this morning I heard the 'lamentations' of something on the other side of the hut. I went round, and found another of our species, a visitor of ten or twelve months to this globe, lying in a pool of mud. I said, 'Here is another foundling!' and had it taken up. Its mother came up afterwards, and I mildly expostulated with her, remarking, however good it might be for the spawn of frogs, it was not good for our species. The creature drank milk after this with avidity."

Such incidents explain the hold Gordon obtained over the indigenous population of the Upper Nile. He made friends right and left, as he said, and the trust of the poor people, who had never received kindness, and whose ignorance of the first principles of justice was so complete that he said it would take three generations of sound and paternal government to accustom them to it, in General Gordon was complete and touching. A chapter might be filled with evidence to this effect, but it is unnecessary, as the facts are fully set forth in the "Letters" from Central Africa. The result alone need be dwelt on here. For only too brief a period, and as the outcome of his personal effort, these primitive races saw and experienced the beneficial results of a sound and well-balanced administration. The light was all too quickly withdrawn; but while it lasted, General Gordon stood out as a kind of redeemer for the Soudanese. The poor slaves, from whose limbs the chains of their oppressors had only just been struck, would come round him when anxious about his health, and gently touch him with their fingers. The hostile chiefs, hearing, as Bedden did, that he restored his cattle to and recompensed in other ways a friendly chief who had been attacked in mistake, would lie in wait for him, and lay their views and grievances before him. He could walk fearlessly and unarmed through their midst, and along the river banks for miles, when an Egyptian official

would have required a regiment to guard him, and detached soldiers would have been enticed into the long grass and murdered. Even the hostile tribes like the Bari, who, from a mistaken view of their own military power, would not come to terms, showed their recognition of his merit by avoiding in their attacks the posts in which he happened to be. Thus there grew up round Gordon in the Soudan a sublime reputation for nobleness and goodness that will linger on as a tradition, and that, when these remote regions along the Equator fall under civilized authority, will simplify the task of government, provided it be of the same pattern as that dispensed by General Gordon.

As the subject has a permanent practical value, the following passage embodying General Gordon's views is well worth repetition :—

"I feel sure that a series of bad governments have ruined the people. Three generations of good government would scarcely regenerate them. Their secretiveness is the result of the fear that if they give, it may chance that they may want. Their indolence is the result of experience that if they do well, or if they do badly, the result will be *nil* to them, therefore why should they exert themselves? Their cowardice is the result of the fear of responsibility. They are fallen on so heavily if anything goes wrong. Their deceit is the result of fear and want of moral courage, as they have no independence in their characters. For a foreign power to take this country would be most easy. The mass are far from fanatical. They would rejoice in a good government, let its religion be what it might. A just administration of law, and security of person against arbitrary conduct, would do a great deal. It is the Government that needs civilizing far more than the people. Mehemet Ali and his descendants have always gone on the principle of enriching themselves by monopolies of all sorts. None, not even the present Khedive (Ismail), have brought in civilizing habits or customs with any desire to benefit the country, or, at any rate, they have subordinated this desire to that of obtaining an increased revenue."

But while Gordon brought kindness and conciliation into play, the settlement of the region entrusted to his care called for sterner measures, and he was not the man, with all his nobility of character and overflowing supply of the milk of human kindness, to refrain from those vigorous and decisive measures that keep turbulent races in subjection, and advance the cause of civilization, which in so many quarters of the world must be synonymous with British supremacy. The student of his voluminous writings will find many passages that express philosophical doubts as to our right to coerce black races, and to bind peoples who in their rude and primitive fashion are free to the car of our wide-world Empire. But I am under no obligation to save them the trouble of

discovery by citing them, more especially because I believe that they give a false impression of the man. I have affirmed, and shall adduce copious and, as I think, convincing evidence, at every turn of his varied experiences, that the true Gordon was not the meek, colourless, milk-and-water, text-expounding, theological disputant many would have us accept as a kind of Bunyan's hero, but in action an uncompromising and resistless leader, who, when he smote, at once struck his hardest. Gordon has supplied the answer to his own misgivings as to our moral right to coerce and subject tribes who advanced their natural claims to be left undisturbed: "We cannot have them on our flank, and it is indispensable that they shall be subjected."

Having organised his new forces, equipped all his steamers—one of which was fitted out with machinery that had been left in Baker's time to rust in the Korosko Desert—General Gordon set himself to the task of systematically organising the line of posts which he had conceived and begun to construct in the first stages of his administration. The object of these posts was twofold. By them he would cut the slave routes in two, and also open a road to the great Lakes of the Equator. In the first few months of his residence he had transferred the principal station from Gondokoro to Lardo, twelve miles lower down the stream, and on the left instead of the right bank of the river. These places lie a little on each side of the fifth degree of north latitude, and Gordon fixed upon Lardo as his capital, because it was far the healthier. Above Lardo he established at comparatively short stages further posts at, in their order, Rageef, Beddem, Kerri, Moogie, and Laboré, immediately beyond the last of which occur the Fola Falls, the only obstruction to navigation between Khartoum and the Lakes. Above those Falls Gordon established a strong post at Duffli, and dragged some of his steamers overland, and floated them on the short link of the Nile between that place and Lake Albert, establishing a final post north of that lake, at Wadelai. When his fleet commanded that lake, he despatched his lieutenant, Gessi, across it up the Victoria Nile, connecting the two great lakes, and continued his chain of posts along it by Magungo, Anfina, Foweira, and Mrooli, to the very borders of Mtesa's dominion in Uganda. By means of these twelve posts General Gordon established the security of his communications, and he also inspired his men with fresh confidence, for, owing to the short distances between them, they always felt sure of a near place of refuge in the event of any sudden attack. Thus it came to pass that whereas formerly Egyptian troops could only move about in bodies of 100 strong, General Gordon was able to send his boats and despatches with only two soldiers in charge of them; and having entirely

suppressed the slave-trade within his own jurisdiction, he was left free to accomplish the two ulterior objects of his mission, viz. the installation of the Khedive's flag on the Lakes, and the establishment of definite relations with Mtesa, whose truculent vassal, Kaba Rega, of Unyoro, showed open hostility and resentment at the threatened encroachment on his preserves.

It was neither a reprehensible nor an unintelligible vanity for the Egyptian ruler to desire the control of the whole of the great river, whose source had been traced south of the Equator, and 2000 miles beyond the limits of the Pharaohs' dominions. Nor was the desire diminished when, without sharing the gratification of the Prince in whose name he acted, General Gordon advanced cogent reasons for establishing a line of communication from Gondokoro, across the territory of Mtesa, with the port of Mombasa on the Indian Ocean. As Gordon pointed out, that place was nearly 1,100 miles from Khartoum, and only 900 from Mombasa, while the advance to the Lakes increased the distance from the one place by nearly 300 miles, and reduced that to the other in the same measure. This short and advantageous line of communication with the Equatorial Province and Upper Nile was beyond both the power and the sphere of the Khedive; but in the task of winning one of the most important of African zones formally recognised as lying within the British sphere of influence, the route advocated by General Gordon in 1875 has now become of the most undoubted value and importance.

The aversion to all forms of notoriety except that which was inseparable from his duty led Gordon to shrink from the publicity and congratulations sure to follow if he were the first to navigate those inland seas on the Equator. Having made all the arrangements, and provided for the complete security of the task, he decided to baffle the plans in his honour of the Royal Geographical Society, by delegating the duty of first unfurling the Khedive's flag on their waters to his able and much-trusted lieutenant, Gessi. Although he sometimes took hasty resolutions, in flat opposition to his declared intentions, he would probably have adhered to this determination but for reading in one of Dr Schweinfurth's published lectures that "it may be that Lake Albert belongs to the Nile basin, but it is not a settled fact, for there are seventy miles between Foweira and Lake Albert never explored, and one is not authorised in making the Nile leave Lake Albert. The question is very doubtful." The accidental perusal of this passage changed General Gordon's views. He felt that this task devolved on him as the responsible administrator of the whole region, and that his natural shrinking from trumpery and too often easily-earned geogra-

hical honours, which he has bluntly asserted should only be granted y the Sovereign, did not justify his evading a piece of work that came ithin his day's duty. Therefore he resolved to ascertain the fact by ersonal examination, and to set at rest the doubts expressed by the erman traveller.

Expanding Dr Schweinfurth's remarks, he explained that "it was ntended that the Nile did not flow out of Lake Victoria, and thence hrough Lake Albert, and so northward, but that one river flowed out f Lake Victoria and another out of Lake Albert, and that these two ivers united and formed the Nile. This statement could not be ositively denied, inasmuch as no one had actually gone along the iver from Foweira to Magungo. So I went along it with much suffer- ng, and settled the question. I also found that from Foweira or Karuma Falls there was a series of rapids to Murchison Falls, thus *y degrees* getting rid of the 1000-feet difference of level between Foweira and Magungo." While mapping this region, Gordon one lay marched eighteen miles through jungle and in pouring rain, and n each of the four following days he also walked fifteen miles—and he month was August, only a few miles north of the Equator, or, in her words, the very hottest period of the year. Having established e course of the Nile and its navigability to the Murchison Falls close the Victoria Nyanza, General Gordon gave what he thought was a shing touch to this exploring expedition by effecting an arrangement King Mtesa.

But in order to explain the exact significance of this step, and the equent disappointment when it was found that the arrangement was ry and destitute of practical value, it is necessary to go back a little, race the course of events in the Uganda region.

The Egyptian advance towards the south brought in its train two ions of external policy. One was with Abyssinia, of which we ear much in the next chapter; and the other was with the king- f Uganda and the kinglets who regarded Mtesa as their chief. Of he principal was Kaba Rega, chief of Unyoro, and the recognised ruler of the territory lying between the two Lakes. He was a man of capacity and spirit, and had raised himself to the position he occupied by ousting kinsmen who had superior claims to the privileges of supreme authority. In the time of Gordon's predecessor, Sir Samuel Baker, Kaba Rega had come to the front as a native champion, resolved to defy the Egyptians and their white leaders to do their worst. In a spirited attack on Baker's camp at Masindi, he endeavoured to settle the pretensions of his invaders at a blow, but he found that numbers were no match for the superior arms of his opponent. But defeat did

not diminish his spirit. Baker decreed his deposition as King of Unyoro, proclaiming in his stead a cousin named Rionga, but the order had no practical effect. Kaba Rega retired a little from the vicinity of the Egyptian forces; he retained "the magic stool" of authority over the lands and peoples of Unyoro, and his cousin Rionga possessed nothing beyond the empty title contained in an Egyptian official decree. This was the position when Gordon appeared on the scene, and his first obligation was to give something like force and reality to the pretensions of Rionga.

If Kaba Rega had been satisfied to retain the practical marks of authority, it is probable that Gordon would have been well content to leave him alone, but irritated by the slight placed upon him by Sir Samuel Baker, he assumed the offensive on every possible occasion. He attacked Colonel Long, one of Gordon's lieutenants, on his way back from Mtesa, just as he had Baker; he threatened the Egyptian station at Foweira; and above all, he welcomed the thwarted slave-dealers, who were not averse to taking their revenge in any form at Gordon's expense. In these circumstances an active policy was forced on General Gordon, who promptly decided that Kaba Rega was "too treacherous" to be allowed to retain his kingdom, and that measures must be taken to set up Rionga in his place. It was at this moment unfortunately, that General Gordon discovered the worthlessness of his troops, and when, in 1876, he had organised his new force, and was ready to carry out the policy he had decided on in 1874, he was thinking mostly of his departure from the Soudan, and had no time to proceed to extremities against these southern adversaries, for behind Kaba Rega stood Mtesa.

When Gordon, in January 1876, entered the territory of Unyoro belonging to Kaba Rega, he found it desirable to take up the cause of Anfina, in preference to that of Rionga, as the more influential chief, but neither proved in popularity or expertness a match for Kaba Rega. The possession of "the magic stool," the ancestral throne or copper stool of the family of Unyoro, believed to be identified with the fortunes of the little kingdom, alone compensated for the few losses in the open field, as Kaba Rega was always careful to retreat on the approach of his most dangerous adversary. Neither of his kinsmen was likely to prove a formidable foe. Rionga passed his hours in native excesses, in the joy of receiving the titular rank of Vakil to the Khedive. Anfina alienated Gordon's friendly feeling by suggesting the wholesale assassination of Kaba Rega's officers and followers when they came on a mission to his camp. Kaba Rega carried off the stool to the south, or rather the west, of Victoria Nyanza, and bided his time, while Mtesa wrote a half-defiant

and half-entreating letter to Gordon, asking him to spare Unyoro. Mtesa had his own views of gain, and when Gordon proposed to establish a fortified post with a garrison of 160 men at Urundogani, the Uganda ruler begged that it might be stationed at his own capital, Dubaga, with the view of either winning over the troops to his service or employing them against his own enemies. Gordon saw through this proposal and withheld his consent, but his lieutenant, Nuehr Agha, acted on his own responsibility, and moved with his force to Dubaga. In a few weeks Gordon learnt that they were all, practically speaking, prisoners, and that his already heavy enough task had been increased by the necessity of rescuing them.

Gordon accordingly advanced in person to Mrooli, the nearest point to Mtesa's capital without actually crossing his frontier, and as he had with him a strong force of his newly-raised black contingent, he felt confident of his capacity to punish Mtesa for any act of treachery, and to annex, if necessary, his kingdom. But Gordon did not wish to force a war on Mtesa, or to increase the burdens of the Nile dominion. All he wanted was the restoration of the men detained at Dubaga, and he soon received assurances that his presence, and the moral effect of the force he had brought with him, would attain this result without any necessity for fighting. As Gordon worded his complaint, it was a case not of his wishing to annex Mtesa, but of Mtesa annexing his soldiers.

Having satisfied himself that Mtesa was not willing to risk a quarrel, General Gordon sent Nuehr Agha with ninety men to bring back the 140 men detained at Dubaga, and the task was accomplished without any hitch or delay. This was due partly to the military demonstrations, and partly also to a clever diplomatic move by Gordon, who wrote to Mtesa expressing his readiness to recognise by treaty the independence of Uganda, and to provide a safe-conduct for the King's ambassadors to Cairo. At this time the late Dr Emin, who claimed to be an Arab and a Mahommedan, was at Dubaga, but his influence on the course of events was *nil*, and he and Gordon never met. After the return of the troops Gordon commenced his retirement to the Nile, and after an arduous and dangerous march of eighty miles through a swampy jungle beset by Kaba Rega's tribesmen, who were able to throw their spears with accurate aim for fifty yards, he succeeded in reaching Masindi without loss. Then Gordon drew up a plan of campaign for the effectual subjugation of Kaba Rega, but he did not wait to see it carried out, as the first move could not be made until the grass was dry enough to burn. As soon as that season arrived three columns were to march against the chief of Unyoro in the following order—one consisting of 150 black soldiers, and 3000 of

the Lango tribe, under Rionga, moving from Mrooli to Kisoga; another of about the same strength from Keroto to Masindi; and the third operating from the Albert Lake with the steamer. The plan was a good one, but Kaba Rega, by having recourse to his old Fabian tactics, again baffled it.

Although these events happened when Gordon had reached Cairo, it will be appropriate to give here the result of this campaign. The Unyoro chieftain retired before the Egyptians, who carried off much cattle, and when they in turn retired, he advanced and reoccupied his country. After a brief period the Egyptians definitely gave up their stations at Mrooli, Foweira, and Masindi, on the left bank of the Victoria Nile, and confined themselves to those on its right bank, and thus finally were Mtesa and Kaba Rega left to enjoy their own rude ideas of independence and regal power.

So far as General Gordon was concerned, the Uganda question was then, both for this period and for his subsequent and more important command, definitely closed. But one personal incident remains to be chronicled. When Gordon received Mtesa's request to garrison Dubaga, and had actually planted a station on the Victoria Lake, he telegraphed the facts to the Khedive, who promptly replied by conferring on him the Medjidieh Order. At the moment that Gordon received this intimation he had decided that it would not be politic to comply with Mtesa's request to garrison Dubaga, and he had only just succeeded in rescuing an Egyptian force from a position of danger in the manner described. He felt that he had obtained this decoration "under false pretences," but the recollection of the hard and honourable work he had performed must have soon salved his conscience.

At an early stage of his work Gordon felt disposed to throw it up, and during the whole three years a constant struggle went on within himself as to whether he should stay or return to England. Many causes produced this feeling. There was, in the first place, disillusionment on discovering that the whole thing, from the Egyptian Government point of view, was a sham, and that his name was being made use of to impose on Europe. But then he thought he saw an opportunity of doing some useful and beneficial work, and, stifling his disappointment, he went on. Arrived on the scene, he found himself thwarted by his Egyptian colleagues, and treated with indifference by the Cairene Government. He also discovered that his troops were worthless, and that not one of his officers, civil and military, cared a fig for the task in hand. Their one thought was how to do nothing at all, and Gordon's patience and energy were monopolised, and in the end exhausted, by attempts to extract work from his unwilling subordinates.

Even the effort to educate them up to the simple recognition that a certain amount of work had to be done, and that unless it were well done, it had to be done over again, resulted in failure. To the plain instructions he gave, they would give an interpretation of their own; and while fully admitting on explanation that this was not the proper way of executing any task, they would invariably repeat it after their own fashion, until at length Gordon could see no alternative to performing the task himself. Thus were his labours indefinitely multiplied, and only his exceptional health and energy enabled him to cope with them at all. How much they affected him in his own despite may be judged from the exclamation which escaped him, after he had obtained a considerable success that would have elated any other leader—"But the worry and trouble have taken all the syrup out of the affair!"

The personal glimpses obtainable of Gordon during these depressing years, while engaged on a task he foresaw would be undone by the weakness and indifference of the Egyptian authorities as soon as he gave it up, are very illustrative of his energy and inherent capacity for command. The world at large was quite indifferent to the heroism and the self-denial, amounting to self-sacrifice, which alone enabled him to carry on his own shoulders, like a modern Atlas, the whole administration of a scarcely conquered region, which covered ten degrees of latitude. But we who have to consider his career in all its bearings, and to discover, as it were, behind his public and private acts, the true man, cannot afford to pass over so lightly passages that are in a very special degree indicative of the man's character and temperament. In no other period of his career did he devote himself more strenuously to the details, in themselves monotonous and uninteresting, of a task that brought him neither present nor prospective satisfaction. When the tools with which he was supplied failed him, as they did at every turn, he threw himself into the struggle, and supplied the shortcomings of all the rest. When it was a matter of pulling the boats up the river, he was the first at the ropes, and the last to leave them, wading through the water with his trousers up. If it was his steamer that had run aground, all the active labour, as well as the organisation, fell on him. Sooner than add to the work of those in attendance on him, he would be seen preparing and cooking his own food; and because he could do it better than his native servant, he would clean his duck-gun, with the whole camp agape, until his ways were realised, at an Excellency doing his own work. Nor did he spare himself physically. His average day's walk, which satisfied him that he was in good health, was fourteen miles; but he often exceeded twenty miles, and on one occasion he even walked thirty-five miles under a tropical sun. Of the conduct of his soldiers against an

enemy, or in coping with the difficulties of river navigation, he was always nervous, and whether for work or for fighting he used, he said, "to pray them up as he did his men in China"; but without his knowledge, one of his own soldiers was vigilantly observant of his conduct, and has recorded, through the instrumentality of Slatin Pasha, his recollections of Gordon as a fighter and leader of soldiers:—

"Gordon was indeed a brave man. I was one of his chiefs in the fight against the Mima and Khawabir Arabs; it was in the plain of Fafa, and a very hot day. The enemy had charged us, and had forced back the first line, and their spears were falling thick around us; one came within a hair's-breadth of Gordon, but he did not seem to mind it at all, and the victory we won was entirely due to him and his reserve of 100 men. When the fight was at its worst he found time to light a cigarette. Never in my life did I see such a thing; and then the following day, when he divided the spoil, no one was forgotten, and he kept nothing for himself. He was very tender-hearted about women and children, and never allowed them to be distributed, as is our custom in war, but he fed and clothed them at his own expense, and had them sent to their homes as soon as the war was over."

This picture of Gordon lighting a cigarette in the press of a doubtful battle may well be coupled with that already given during the Taeping rebellion, of his standing unarmed in the breach of an assaulted stockade, while around him pressed on or wavered the individuals of a forlorn hope. It will be difficult for anyone to find in all the annals of war another instance of human courage more nearly approaching the sublime.

In November 1875 General Gordon had fully made up his mind to resign and return to Cairo, in consequence of the indifference with which he was treated by the Khedive's Government, and he had actually written the telegrams announcing this intention, and given orders to pack up the stores for the passage down the Nile, when the receipt of a long letter full of praise and encouragement from the Khedive Ismail induced him to alter his plans, to tear up the telegrams, and to continue his work. General Gordon gives his reason for changing his mind very briefly: "The man had gone to all this expense under the belief that I would stick to him; I could not therefore leave him." So he stayed on for another year. In July 1876 he formally and more deliberately resigned, but the execution of this decision had to be postponed by the necessity he felt under, as already explained, of solving the geographical questions connected with the Nile and the Lakes, and also of securing the southern frontier against Kaba Rega and Mtesa.

These tasks accomplished, or placed in the way of accomplishment,

there remained no let or hindrance to his departure; and by the end of October he was in Khartoum. But even then he felt uncertain as to his ultimate plans, and merely telegraphed to the Cairo authorities that he intended to come down for a time. With his back turned on the scene of his labours, the old desire not to leave his work half done came over him, and all the personal inconvenience and incessant hardship and worry of the task were forgotten in the belief that he was called on by God "to open the country thoroughly to both Lakes." He saw very clearly that what he had accomplished in the three years of his stay did not provide a permanent or complete cure of the evils arising out of the slave-trade and the other accompaniments of misgovernment, and he did not like to be beaten, which he admitted he was if he retired without remedying anything. These reflections explain why, even when leaving, his thoughts were still of returning and resuming the work, little more than commenced, in those Mussulman countries, where he foresaw a crisis that must come about soon.

But these thoughts and considerations did not affect his desire for a change to Lower Egypt, or even to visit home; and leaving Khartoum on 12th November he reached Cairo on 2nd December. He then formally placed his resignation in the Khedive's hands, but it was neither accepted nor declined; and the Khedive, in some mysterious manner, seems to have arrived at the sound conclusion that after a brief rest General Gordon would sicken of inaction, and that it would be no difficult manner to lure him back to that work in the Soudan which had already established its spell over him. Of that work, considerable as it was as the feat of a single man, it need only be said that it would have remained transitory in its effect and inconclusive in its results if General Gordon had finally turned his back on it at the close of his tenure of the post of Governor of the Equatorial Province at the end of the year 1876. When he left Cairo in the middle of December for England there was really very little reason to doubt that at the right moment he would be ready to take up the work again.

END OF VOL. I.

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